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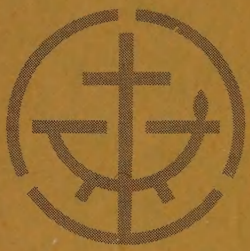

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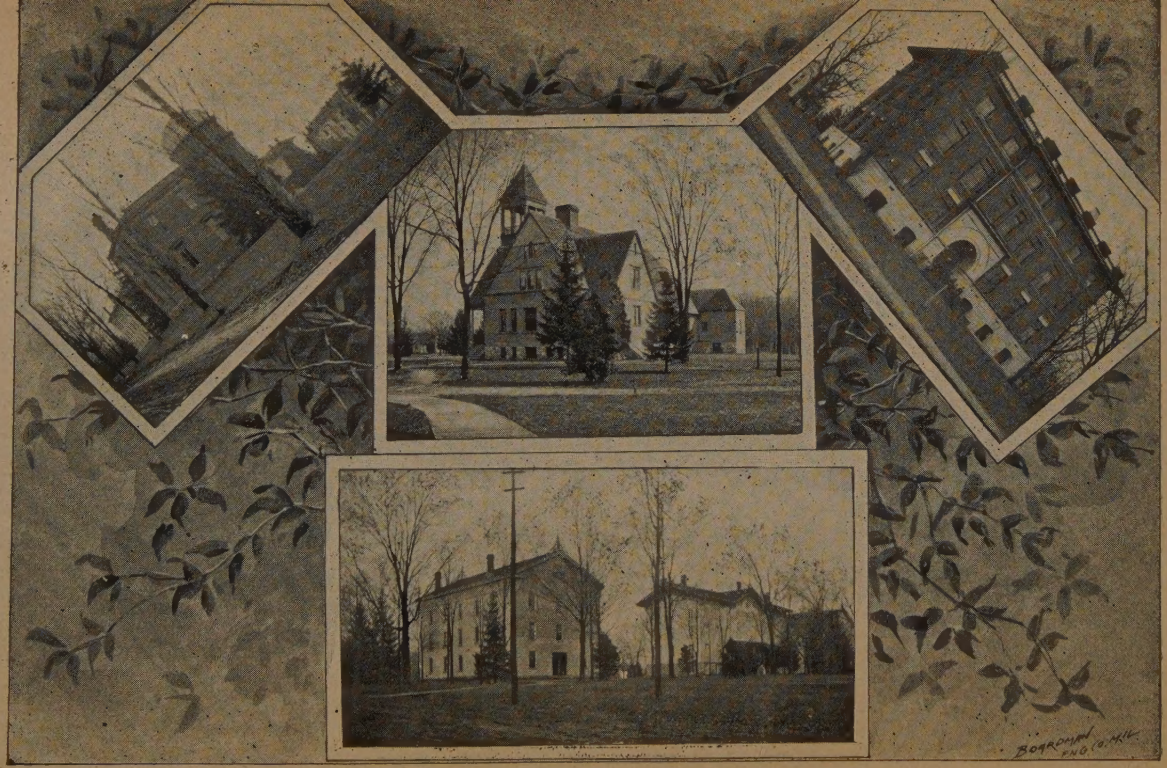

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THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL PULPIT.

A VOLUME OF SERMONS

BY MINISTERS OF THE

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

OF THE

M. E. CHURCH IN MICHIGAN,

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE

REV. JOSEPH F. BERRY, D. D.

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1898

C. S. EASTMAN,
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER,

MONROE:
SERMON PRINTING HOUSE,
1898.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

This volume of sermons, by ministers of the Michigan Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, is a sister to the Detroit Conference volume issued a year ago. From its mechanical comeliness and intrinsic excellences, it may well be expected that it will find as many and as fond admirers as did its elder sister. The cordial reception accorded the initial volume of Conference Sermons by the ministers and people of the Detroit Conference, warrants the expectation that a similar work by their own ministers will be as cordially welcomed by the pastors and people of the Michigan Conference. Our experience has confirmed an old-time impression of ours that our people are pleased to see the printed sermons of their pastors, and that when properly presented to them, they will both buy and read them. Special inquiry and observation have assured us that these sermons *are read* with interest and profit by a large number of our people. It is not true that good sermons are not read. It is often felt by thoughtful hearers that the stronger sermons of their pastors should be given permanent form. Who of us has not felt, in listening to an excellent sermon, strong and beautiful in literary

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expression, rich in thought and grace and unction, that it was a sore pity that it must be so transient, and wished that it might be put in form to continue and diffuse its influence. The sermons of this volume are of a character to excite this wish. They are the strong utterances of able and cultured minds specially devoted to the study and presentation of the great themes of the Gospel. The blessing which, doubtless, in every case, attended their delivery to their auditors, will be repeated and many times multiplied to their larger body of readers. In two thousand homes of the Michigan Conference this volume will be as a resident minister of God, nourishing intelligent piety, prompting to holy activities, and quickening aspiration to the highest ideals of character and experience. The high character of these sermons will serve still further to establish our ministry in the confidence and esteem of its people, and give added weight and influence to its ministrations. And it will serve the further purpose of advancing the standard of pulpit excellence amongst us. As noble examples of homiletic attainment, they will stimulate and guide the best ambitions of our younger ministry.

It is believed that, to most of its readers, the value of this volume will be much enhanced by the portrait of its author accompanying each sermon. There is an instinctive wish, with most of us, to look upon the face of any person who has greatly interested and profited

us. To many people these portraits will render this book a cherished memorial of beloved pastors.

Attention is called to the fact that in the arrangement of the sermons no order of precedence has been observed, except that the sermon of Bishop Vincent appears in its appropriate place at the beginning of the volume.

The joy of presenting these sermons to their readers is impaired by one fact alone. Many honored names of the Conference, are, by the limitations of our space, prevented from appearing. The editor presents his sincere regrets and hopes the impossibilities of the case will excuse otherwise unpardonable omissions.

The editor appreciates his obligations to these authors for their courteous and generous response to his request for their sermons. He realizes how large a favor it is for a busy pastor to pause amid the incessant press of urgent and absorbing duties to make ready a sermon for the press. He also acknowledges the pains-taking care shown in the preparation of their MSS., greatly reducing the labor of editing, and making it a very delight.

This fair volume is now sent forth, with its precious messages of truth and love, with the fervent prayer that it may be a seed-sowing whose final garnering will be thirty, sixty and a hundred fold.

C. S. EASTMAN.

INTRODUCTION.

The preacher has been the thought-leader of the world. He is that to-day, though in this age of electricity, the perfection of the printing-press, and the triumph of rapid transit, the editor disputes the preacher's supremacy.

The press has come to be the preacher's most efficient ally. It multiplies his congregation and influence a hundred-fold. Many who read would not hear. While we cannot reproduce upon the printed page the fire in the preacher's eye, the modulations of his voice, nor the spiritual unction with which his message is proclaimed, yet the truth which he teaches becomes perennial—the book is a voice which never ceases to speak. Who can measure the influence of the printed sermons of Wesley, Frederick Robertson, Spurgeon, Beecher, Simpson and others whose renown has scarcely been less wide?

I am greatly pleased that my old friend, the Rev. C. S. Eastman, has determined to gather into a volume the sermons of eminent members of the Michigan Conference. That conference has produced many noble preachers whose voices long ago grew still in

death. What a pity that some of the great sermons which stirred the multitudes in the pioneer days were not preserved! But the mantles of those heroic Elijahs have been caught by the consecrated Elishas of our day, who carry forward with devotion and zeal the work which, amid deprivations and sacrifices, was so gloriously begun. That at least a specimen sermon from some of the best preachers of this generation is to be put into permanent form, will be a gratification to those now living and an increasing benediction to those who come after.

Bro. Eastman has been peculiarly fortunate in the variety and interest of the themes chosen, and the high character, in every respect, of the contributions he has been able to obtain. My ardent wish is that these gospel messages may bring spiritual benedictions to a multitude of readers.

JOSEPH F. BERRY.

PRAYER.

BY BISHOP JOHN H. VINCENT, D. D., L. L. D.

Preached before the Class of 1896 of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, August 16, 1896, at Chautauqua, N. Y.

Text: "What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" (Job xxi, 15.) "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss." (James iv, 3.) "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," or as in the new revision, "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." (James v, 16.

The subject of prayer is very old and commonplace. But old things, like the sun and moon, fountains of water and the enfolding atmosphere, are essential to the life of to-day.

The doctrine of prayer is now opposed, as in the days of Job, by men who say, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" We see in this statement how weak and inadequate is the skeptic's view of religion. To him God is "the Almighty," religion is "service," and prayer is for "profit." The skeptic's

BISHOP JOHN H. VINCENT.

repudiation of prayer, if really sincere, reveals the root of his own character.

James says that men "ask and receive not because they ask amiss." Prayer is often ineffective and unprofitable. Sometimes one is tempted to say that most prayers are unanswered. Many a prayer is unanswered because it is a prayer of form without heart; a prayer of words, tones, inflections, postures; appealing to the aesthetic and sensuous nature alone; a prayer that claims merit because of the inconvenience and sacrifice to which the devout worshiper subjects himself; a prayer of morbid introspection with agonies and raptures of pious egotism. Men may be, and often are, selfish in the pursuit of religion, as in the pursuit of wealth or learning. They may pray with ecclesiastical aim and partisan motive. Men may ask for things with the lips which they should work for with their hands. Men may ask with selfish motive for the good things of this life—health, money, comfort, prosperity, good weather, fame. They may ask for right things with bad motive, as when they covet amiability, patience, the grace of silence and self-control, power in public discourse, influence over men, and such things as may make them popular in society. Men may ask for things which neither divine command nor promise has authorized. Thus prayers by the million die in the very breath that gives them birth.

They fall like wasted blossoms to the earth.

It is easy to account for unbelief concerning prayer. Prevailing ignorance will account for much of it. Parents, teachers, and ministers, in this generation, assume that because in youth they were properly instructed in religious doctrines, therefore, the present generation must also be informed. But there is too little teaching of the doctrine of prayer to children and young people in our days. And are there not arguments in favor of prayer which multitudes have never heard? Is it possible that the attention of this scientific age to the order of nature—the invariableness of nature, as it is called—has led men to suppose that the same process of cause and effect enters into the realm of mind and of morals? Is not prayer depreciated in our time by the superficial multitude?

Men forget that prayer is an instinct of human nature; that it is as natural to pray as it is to converse; that prayer is universal in the sense of being recognized by all races and in all ages; that it is rational in its claims and fundamental ideas; that it is characteristic of the highest types of religion which the world knows; that the commands and promises of Christianity sustain with emphasis the doctrine of prayer; that it is indorsed by centuries of experience, and furnishes a mass of phenomena of immense value to the psychologist; that the doctrine is illustrated by the most noble types of character which the world has

known; that Milton, Shakespeare, Herschel, Hugh Miller, Dawson, Dana, the Brownings, Tennyson, Lincoln, Gladstone, and an innumerable company of royal souls besides, recognize the place and power and value of prayer; that in thousands of cases men who at one period of life, through the influence of ambition, pre-occupation, and scientific enthusiasm, have been tempted to abandon the idea of a divine Providence or of a divine existence, and consequently of prayer as a privilege of the human soul, have returned in their later years, in the full maturity of their power, to "the old faith they learned beside their mother's knee."

The fact remains that we all need—every one of us—all the strength and cheer that are in the doctrine of prayer. Sin burdens us; the blackness of an infinite mystery overshadows us; the way of life is often dark and rugged. We grow weary. There is so much sorrow among men—so many failures of their cherished schemes; disease comes so insidiously and death so certainly; homes are broken up by so many and such diverse causes, that the instinct to pray leads men, everywhere, to demand, at some time in life, access to the Power that governs the universe. We believe in prayer, and are prepared to accept the statement of James, that there is "an effectual fervent prayer" possible to men, and that it "availeth much."

There is an effectual prayer of the unrighteous man. This statement opens to us the whole question

of prayer as to its inmost significance, and into this let us look for a short time this morning. Let us study an unrighteous man whose life is spent in the pursuit of wealth. He may not pray at all, as we understand prayer. He says he does not pray. He is willing to be called an infidel; and whether he is willing or not, men do so call him. Now let us look at this man. Let me show you that he is a man of prayer. In the pursuit of wealth he is a seeker, a fervent and successful seeker of wealth. He has: 1. A clearly defined object of life—an aim of which he never loses sight day or night. His aim is to be rich. 2. His aim is not a mere form. It is a force. It is fervent with desire. With intensity he covets money. 3. But his aim and desire are accompanied by a fixed, unchangeable, and persistent determination. He not only sees the end and longs for its attainment, but with emphasis he resolves upon it. He says, "I will be rich." 4. But the aim, the desire, and the purpose he makes effective as far as he can by indefatigable endeavor. He works out the things he resolves upon. He struggles, denies himself, puts forth strenuous exertion. 5. There is another element in this man. He has an all-pervading faith in himself, his efforts, the principles on which he operates, and in the men with whom he co-operates. Trusting, he waits. He waits, working. He is confident that his schemes will succeed.

Now, you would not call him a praying man, and yet the qualities which control him are the essential qualities of the only prayer that is effectual. He is in himself an embodied prayer. His whole life is a supplication—day and night, summer and winter. It is as if he put the ruling force of his personality into a formal expression like this: O Wealth—in silver and gold, bonds and estates— I seek thee! I love thee! I hunger and thirst after thee! I surrender my life to thee! I risk my destiny, I let everything else go for thee! I will have thee! With unwavering purpose I will plan and toil day and night for what are to me the highest things of life! I am already sure of my success! I am already glad because I know that I shall succeed!" This, in words, is what his life says in deeds.

Thus we see that prayer is not all in words, although it finds words. Prayer is the essence of life. It is an atmosphere. It is a perpetual movement of the soul with an object always in view; and it is always the same object. And there is always an insatiate desire for its attainment, an unflinching purpose, a corresponding effort, and an implicit faith in certain conditions. Thus prayer "without ceasing" is a necessity of life. To be is to pray. All day is prayer time. Now, the unrighteous man who thus prays does not always gain the end he seeks. He may indeed gain sterility and dearth of spirit. His coffers are

filled, but his higher nature is empty. His conscience is benumbed. He has the things he desires, but God sends barrenness to his soul.

There is, however, another element in the prayer of the righteous man we do not find in that of the unrighteous. Of course, worldly men rarely use words to formulate their prayer. They soliloquize, indeed. The man in pursuit of wealth has many a conversation with himself. It is not unusual to see his lips moving, as if the force of his soul must find utterance. The soliloquy is the fruit of that controlling force which is the very spirit of prayer.

Thus apostrophe flows from the same dominating energy of the personal life. It is of the nature of prayer and proves the necessity of prayer. It is the blossom of the soul. It becomes in the devout man a fragrant prayer before God. Hear Wordsworth among the mountains of the English lake region, and Coleridge before Mont Blanc in the Vale of Chamouni! Sentiments of admiration, of affection, of awe, of delight find spontaneous expression. Thus one talks to a babe that cannot understand a word he says, and he talks to his pet animal.

But vocal and visible prayer is not the principal thing in prayer. Let us look deeper still into the nature of man. Here you find two natures, a self that grovels and an ideal self. These are what we sometimes call the "flesh" and the "spirit." Both are real

to the consciousness of man. There is, moreover, within the human soul a more marvelous phenomenon —the consciousness of another Presence. Here within are the *me* and the *not me*; the human personality one calls himself, with desire, sense of sin, feeling of unrest, weariness; and another and divine personality which we call God—for God is revealed within the soul of the man. As Professor Harris says: "God does not present Himself to the distinctive self-consciousness as a Being identical with the human spirit; but He presents Himself as a being distinct from the man to the primitive consciousness in its broader meaning." Between self and God within, there is often a conscious struggle. From the One comes an appeal; from the other comes a refusal. An effort is put forth by the One to bring the other to terms. This is the time of the man's opportunity—a crisis in his deeper and real life.

Now the end of prayer is the turning of the inner self-conscious being toward the God within, of whose presence he is assured. And whatever prayer may be in outward forms, by whatever intellectual statement it may be presented, whatever physical attitude may be assumed by the worshiper, whatever accompaniments of intonation or music, the essence of prayer is the drawing of the personal consciousness within toward the divine Spirit within. Man reaches after God. Man takes hold of God. And all this within

the soul where God Himself is perpetually reaching after man.

Prayer is, therefore, with the Christian, a transaction with God, the intentional and intelligent recognition of Him, and of course, some expression is indispensable. Words must be spoken. They must be spoken to help ourselves. They must be spoken to help others. Thus prayer goes into words. But how small a part of prayer are the posture and the speech! Let me repeat: the aim, the desire, the resolve, the endeavor, the confidence, the utterance! Alas for prayer that is only utterance—empty words, hollow sounds!

Once establish the fact that there is a God who is a Creator, having power over His subjects, power to help, power to hurt, and prayer to Him is necessary. But once establish the fact of His character as a loving and wise Father, and prayer is indispensable. It is not possible to think of an infinite Father, possessed of all power, His children finite and feeble, in uncertainty, desire burning within them for the touch of His Spirit, and not at the same time to rest in the doctrine of prayer.

Of course, one may easily see that the idea of prayer is often anthropomorphic and narrow. God becomes a finite being. And prayer is no more than the sending out to some remote presence a cry for help. Is it not better to think of God as an all-per-

vading atmosphere, light, ether, everywhere present and ready to be employed through His infinite grace for the good of His creatures? As you bring to a focus the rays of the sun, as you condense the air and transform it into power, may not the human soul thus fix its thoughts and will on God, and then receive from God in God's way what He has and what He is glad to give?

There is reality in prayer. Man may, in the spiritual kingdom of which he is a part, command currents of power, which, but for his prayer, would never have turned toward him. He needs such gracious help. The spirit of self reigns within. It is full of self-seeking. It is sensitive to slights. It is suspicious. The other nature strives against all this, but sometimes, and often, alas, with little good results. The evil seems for a time to triumph; and when the good does triumph, much of its success is owing to circumstances, natural reactions, the pressure of fear, of concern for popular favor, of interest diverted to some other selfish aim. These two natures, or these two elements in human nature, find a third presence to which I have referred. Here is where the energies of the spiritual world reinforce man's nobler nature, and then the prayer which is high aim, ardent desire, firm resolution, consistent endeavor, and believing supplication, is answered. Power comes to reinforce, to stimulate, to inspire, to strengthen, to uplift, to delight,

to ravish, to enrich, to glorify the human soul. There is power, which is in answer to prayer, able to sustain in suffering, strengthen in weakness, comfort in bereavement, give companionship in loneliness, and enrich the most sterile life. It is this power which can transform death into life and give visions to the soul even at the hour of dissolution.

A devout writer wisely says: "If a man does not believe in prayer, let him try it. If a man will, during a period of six months, in the various difficulties and exigencies of life, as they arise, come to God in prayer about them, I do not say he will at that time find all his prayers answered—for God's ranges of operation cover more than six months—but I will venture to say that in six months he will have some extraordinary leadings, guidings and happenings that will open his eyes and that will awaken a conviction that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. If a man does not believe in prayer, let him try it."

Amiel says: "We dream alone, we suffer alone, we die alone, we inhabit the last resting place alone. But there is nothing to prevent us from opening our solitude to God. And so what was an austere monologue becomes dialogue, reluctance becomes docility, renunciation passes into peace, and the sense of painful defeat is lost in the sense of recovered liberty—all is well, my God envelops me."

I once stood at the fountain of Neptune in the

Piazza della Signore, Florence, Italy, and watched a white dove with soiled wings fly to the fountain. It ventured nearer and nearer. It placed itself under one little streamlet of water after another. Now it lifted one wing, then the other, and the cleansing waters were applied to it. It rested for a moment on some projection among the bronze work of the fountain, the spray still playing upon it, and then flew away into the sunlight. Do you never feel, amid the restlessness and discouragement, the weariness of life, that you would be more glad than words can tell for the cleansing of your spirit? And do all the teachings of the Holy Scriptures concerning the fountain of life and the love of God mean nothing?

God may "know our need," but does not your child know its need? What you are to your child God is to you. As you love it, God loves you. What if the child never tried to talk to you? He does not need to talk. Still you insist that he shall ask for what he wants, and that he shall ask in a particular way. Now and then you make him ask over and over again, just to enjoy the sweetness, simplicity, and earnestness of his little nature. His talk does a great deal more than to tell you his needs. It improves his vocabulary and enunciation. It gives him facility of expression. It weaves more closely the spell of mutual sympathy between you and him. It increases his sense of dependence upon you and his love for you.

And it wins for him many a hug and kiss and smile even when you give him no information. Is communion between you and your child so much to you and to him, and so necessary to both, and yet do you fancy there is no probability or possibility of a corresponding communion between you and your loving Father in the spiritual world of which you are a part?

I know that God is great, but can that greatness —the vast disparity between the finite personality and the infinite, absolute Being we call God—prevent or diminish love and care? How large, and wise, and learned, and rich, and powerful must a father be in order to lose love for his child? The greater the glory of God, the greater the value to Him of the most minute creatures He has made.

The true scholar, or the man of comprehensive view, although not a profound scholar, who knows enough about the history of scientific hypotheses, and of the relation between so-called "science" and so-called "theology" in the past, to be able to look with impartiality upon them, will soon see how men mistake in the emphasis they put upon the "order of nature" when the subject of the divine government and activity is considered. It does not follow that the "order of nature" exhausts the divine order of action. You own an automatic piano that plays the tunes pricked and cut out on the cylinders which you bought with the instrument. You insist that the only tunes the

piano can produce are those on the cylinders. You will be surprised, therefore, to see a fine master of the keys sit down some day and accompany the unrolling cylinder, producing charming musical effects—variations and harmonies not provided for at all on the unfolding sheet. And you will be still further surprised when the same musician sits down, and without any cylinder at all, plays on the same instrument a selection from some master superior to anything the cylinder contained or the automatic process ever produced. May there not be as great and as wonderful possibilities in nature and life? When we know certain forces and laws which reveal themselves in the universe our knowledge may not exhaust the resources of the First Cause, the present Ruler and the loving Father of our race, who is also the God of nature. It is not well for men of the nineteenth century to dogmatize about what nature and mind can or cannot do.

Faith in prayer is not a characteristic either of ignorance or of a limited intellect. Has the invisible and spiritual God imparted to His spiritual creatures now in the flesh a desire after Himself, longings for fellowship with Himself, the touch of His presence, some mystic ministry of inward healing, encouragement, and comfort? And are we His children into whom He breathes these desires? Can it be that He will never answer? Are the teachings of prophets and of apostles, and of Christ Himself, vain and meaning-

less? Are the exceeding great and precious promises of the Holy Scriptures without authority? Do the testimonies of Christian believers in all centuries, men and women of culture, of strength, of heroic achievement, sufferers, toilers, preachers, warriors—do all these mean nothing? Does the example of Lord Kelvin, whose jubilee was recently celebrated, mean nothing? Of him Dr. Donald McLeod wrote recently: "When cultured generations look back on the career of Lord Kelvin they will assign to him a place second only to Newton. * * * There is scarcely a field of science that he has not explored, and in which he has not been a discoverer. And he holds his vast store of learning with such unaffected simplicity and beautiful graciousness of spirit as to suggest to those who know him that type of childlikeness of character regarding which it was said, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.'" I shall not give you his list of titles, bestowed by the greatest universities of the world. In mathematics he has no superior. At twenty-two years of age he was appointed to the Chair of Natural Philosophy in Glasgow, which he has now occupied for fifty years. He is a man of vast learning in chemistry and dynamics, famous as an electrician, to whom we are indebted for the success of the cable which unites England and America. He holds patents of many kinds, and even now a large shop in Glasgow is filled with skilful workmen, and

under able scientific management occupied chiefly with their production. He is a ceaseless worker, a marvelous teacher, a man of prayer. Dr. McLeod says: "He is absolutely without affectation or any thought of self-importance. He is neither agnostic nor materialist. Though he has weighed nature from molecule to sun, he has continued a humble Christian."

Have you ever read the story of Ellen Watson, by Miss Buckland? Phillips Brooks once remarked that he had known "two perfect biographies"—the one Boswell's "Johnson," the other Miss Buckland's "Record of Ellen Watson." She was a girl of exquisite taste, intense temperament, the winner of the Bedford College and the Girton College scholarship and a London University College exhibition. She died at twenty-four. In her early years as a student she wrote: "I do not need religion; scientific truth thoroughly satisfies me." She was a disciple of George Eliot. She took a seat where she could see George Eliot's face at a weekly concert; she went regularly to St. Paul's to study Canon Liddon at the height of his oratorical power; to St. Margaret's to listen to Canon Farrar, "because of his beautiful nature," still declaring the while, "I do not reject Christianity because it is defective, but only because it is not what I need." "Science alone can teach realities," she said.

Soon after, from the study of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" and Browning's "Grammarian's Funeral," she came to where she could say: "I am beginning to have thoughts of God. * * * After all, there may be a secret which would make life worth having, and that would be the close presence of a divine Teacher and Friend who listens to our silent prayers and will fill us with all the strength and love we need." At this time she wrote to a friend: "Keep my name in your prayers." Soon after she wrote: "My creed is only, 'I believe in the love of God,' and this I apprehend but dimly." Later on, after her voyage homeward, she wrote: "All difficulties are cleared up, or rather we are shown where they lie, and if invisible to us it is because they are bathed in dazzling light." Later on she wrote: "I believe in God because I have felt the Divine Presence; I no longer have any anxiety about what may happen in life; to me there is no hope but in Christ's religion. Its main ideas seem so reasonable." In the midst of the Holy Communion, at the age of twenty-four, with the words on her lips, "O Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world," she finished her last prayer in the Eternal Presence.

Browning insists that God is still at work in the world, and that no law prevents his answering prayer. He says in "Luria:"

"All changes at His instantaneous will,
Not by the operation of a law
Whose Maker is elsewhere at other work.
His hand is still engaged upon this world—
Man's prayer can force it,
Man's prayer suspend."

Let us stand with Agassiz, as "On the Isle of Penikese," before the beginning of his summer school, he said, in Whittier's language:

"Of our weakness made aware,
On the threshold of our task
Let us light and guidance ask,
Let me pause in silent prayer."

Let "the wisest reverence learn from the Master's silent prayer."

The true scholar may, like the Athenian, lift an altar "To the Unknown God," but he will hear also with gladness Paul's declaration: "Whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." The broadest scholar who is still perplexed with skepticism will be likely to accept at least the hypothesis of a God as the most likely solution of the mystery of existence. And if he should go only that far he must pray. And there is no intellectual process more effective in the work of self-education. If true education is promoted by concentration of thought on invisible reality, how effective must prayer be in promoting such discipline? If the idealizing power is to be fostered and strengthened by exercise, what nobler field than that of the

infinite perfection? If education must cultivate the ethical faculties, exciting thought and ambition and will in the direction of an absolute and eternal righteousness, how influential must prayer be in its reflex influence upon the soul! If education develops one's sense of personality, of individuality, of responsibility, how is this sense enhanced by the recognition of our relation to an eternal God whose holiness we adore, whom we imitate, and whom we serve—a Father of souls. If loftiness of aim and the recognition of vast relations tend to expand the soul, how must prayer minister to this noble end when we look to the whole world as redeemed by Christ, and catch glimpses of the vastness and glory that lie beyond this life.

Well did Samuel Taylor Coleridge say: "The fears, the hopes, the remembrances, the anticipations, the inward and outward experience, the belief and the faith of a Christian, form of themselves a philosophy and a sum of knowledge which a life spent in the Grove of Academus or the 'painted Porch' could not have attained or collected. An hour of solitude passed in sincere and earnest prayer, or the conflict with and conquest over a single passion or 'subtle bosom sin,' will teach us more of thought, will more effectually awaken the faculty, and form the habit, of reflection, than a year's study in the schools without them."

Let us therefore be men and women of real

prayer, "continuing in prayer," "praying without ceasing," living in the world, for the good of the world, enjoying, as we have a right to do, all that is truly good and pleasant in the world. "All things are yours," if within, you are in harmony with the God of nature, of genius, of art, of science, of society. Prayer is the breath of the spirit that is in harmony with God. Learn the conditions of effectual prayer, and conform to them. Daily see that the life aim is right and high; that the ruling desire of your heart is toward truth and love; that the will is set with immovable fixedness on righteousness; that the words and deeds of daily life are in the direction of and in harmony with aim, desire, and purpose, and that you trust in the God revealed in Jesus Christ and abiding within you. Rest in Him. Talk to Him. Wait in silence before Him. Let your whole life of business, of hard labor, of social intercourse, of recreation, of intellectual, artistic, scientific, professional service be in harmony with this docrine of prayer—this life of prayer.

THE WORK OF A RESOLUTE PEOPLE.

BY THE REV. JAMES HENRY POTTS, D. D.,

Editor of the Michigan Christian Advocate.

Text: "The people had a mind to work." Neh. 4:6.

A people who live under a government "of the people, for the people and by the people" should understand the people's mission. I hold that a resolute people, under God, can accomplish almost any good work.

A fine example of popular achievement comes down from the ancient world. About four and one-half centuries before Christ the people of Jerusalem were in a most deplorable condition. The remnant of the captivity was in great affliction and reproach. The walls of the city were broken down and the gates were burned with fire. It was not expected that anybody could restore these essential means of protection and defense. Their enemies scoffed at their weakness, saying that a fox could push over any wall they might build.

But Artaxerxes the king had a faithful and devout cup-bearer, a Jew named Nehemiah, whose faith was

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equal to any undertaking, and when he learned of the condition of affairs in Jerusalem he resolved, after a period of deep mental distress, to do what he could for his unfortunate and despised brethren. For many days he fasted and wept and prayed before the God of heaven, making the most humble confessions and earnestly imploring mercy. His prayer, as recorded in the first chapter of Nehemiah, is a most striking and beautiful petition, and the chief beauty of it is that it was heard and answered. He found himself in favor with the king, obtained permission to go to Jerusalem, and was commissioned to use material from the king's forests in the tremendous undertaking of rebuilding the fallen wall. If you wish to study the facts in detail concerning this remarkable enterprise, you must read the entire book of Nehemiah. A mere handful of poverty-stricken people, exhausted from a recent toilsome journey, surrounded by implacable foes and almost in despair from experiences of the most bitter character, under command of a God-fearing leader and trusting in the name of Jehovah, in the incredibly short space of fifty-two days, reared anew the fortifications of their famous city and transformed it into an impregnable fortress. How was this done? Did God work a miracle, as when, a thousand years previous, he had overthrown the walls of Jericho? Did he discomfit the enemies of his chosen people by a storm of hail, as in the battle of Beth-Horon? Not at all.

The secret of the whole achievement is found in the text—"The people had a mind to work."

My thoughts take form under three heads—*the people*, *their mind*, and *their work*.

I. The people. There were high priests in Jerusalem, but they alone could not have rebuilt the wall. There were also Levites and common priests, but these alone were equally powerless. "The people" were the *whole people*—the official classes and the common ranks together—working as one man for the achievement of their allotted task.

In war, commanding officers are very necessary, but alone and unaided by the common soldiery, they would never win a battle. Shoulder-straps are nice to look upon, especially when in the van of conflict, but they need the support of bayonets and bullets to give them the glory of victory. So in industrial life. Capable leaders are required to organize firms, utilize capital and labor, invent and manufacture new implements, find a market, secure orders and carry on trade, but in all such enterprises there must be brawn as well as brain, humble toil as well as energetic planning, and no man is wise who forgets that it is just as honorable to labor with the hands as it is with the head, and that just as pure and royal blood may flow in the veins of the workingman as in those of his more genteel employer.

"All that hath been majestical
In life or death, since time began,
Is native in the simple heart of all,
The angel-heart of man."

In rebuilding this ancient wall the nobles and the commons, the priests and laymen, men of every tribe and calling, goldsmiths, merchants, apothecaries and what not else, each doing his appropriate part, were seen at the wall together, following the example of the high priests and priests. Even Shallun, "the ruler of half of Jerusalem," claimed no exemption on account of his office, but applied himself with the rest, laboring like a common artisan, his daughters, too, brave and true women that they were, working steadily by his side. It was an instance in which the whole strength of a whole people was brought to bear against a weak place in a public fortification, with the happy result that a magnificent fortress quickly arose out of a flat ruin.

It is unnecessary to remark that the Christian church has a great work to do, and no miracles are likely to be wrought in enabling her to fulfill her mission. She must use her own powers, rely upon her own resources, employ her own members and trust God only for what is beyond her strength. The whole church, ministers and laymen, old and young, poor and rich, women and men, must use their hands and brains and hearts in resolute determination to do the will of God. All the people who joined in this

ancient enterprise were not skilled workmen, but no matter, they did their best, and that is all God asks of anybody. In our age too many are saying, ' Oh, I don't know how," or " There is nothing I can do," or " Others can do better than I," when, in fact, the little missions as well as the great commissions all have need of being fulfilled. We want the whole people to work for God. Just think what might be accomplished in America if the president, the officers of state, the governors, the legislators, the judges, the editors, the orators, the millionaires, the soldiers, the voters, the house-keepers, the pleasure-seekers, all classes and conditions, were to join their forces as one person for the overthrow of wrong and the upbuilding of right! Shenstone said that " the world may be divided into people that read, people that write, people that think, and fox hunters." So the church may be divided into people that work, people who look on, people who cheer, and fault finders. Were the last class to join the first, we could soon gain the rest. And what might not the twenty-five millions of Christians in this country do if they all had a mind to work, and to work together. Rowland Hill declared that he did not want the wall of separation between different orders of Christians to be destroyed, but only lowered, that they all might shake hands a little easier over them. A better understanding, a closer acquaintance with each other, a richer harmony in our undertak-

ings, a more united effort in our attempts to do good would result in better achievements for God and humanity. "Men's hearts ought not to be set against each other," said Carlyle, "but set *with* one another, and all against the evil thing only." Were the Christians of America all to go into battle array against the saloon, the brothel, the gambling dens, the Sabbath-breaking institutions and the other bulwarks of evil, which we all agree should go down, the time would not be far distant when we could raise a shout of victory over the success of our united undertaking.

II. The *mind* of the people. They were resolute. Nothing could daunt them, nor change their purpose. There were some Tekoa noblemen among them who "put not their necks to the work of the Lord," but the perfidy of these few did not shake the confidence nor prostrate the designs of the masses. The body of the populace said, "This work must be done, no matter what the cost, the difficulty or the opposition," and they carried their point. If "confidence is half the battle," obedience is at least one-fourth, and actual work another fourth. These always win.

These people of old had the same mind. God's promise to them had been pledged. Their nation was to be gathered home. The time for action had come. They took hold together, each laboring at a separate point, but all working at the wall, and every one

honoring all the rest who put soul into the work. The supreme object before them made all secondary issues contemptible, Thus, their unity aided their energy, while their charity conserved their heroism, and no strength or labor was lost. There was knowledge in their zeal. We are told how they divided themselves into companies, under certain leaders, each taking a certain portion of the work, It was cheerful, systematic toil, and it proved successful.

Willingness is always the harbinger of success. Willingness usually transforms itself into skill. The willing worker is the diligent worker, the happy worker, and the victorious worker. "Where there's a will there's a way." It is the idle, listless, indifferent, lukewarm worker who fails, and he deserves to fail, but the active, forceful, interested and whole-souled toiler wins, if not at first, then the second or the third time, for his motto is, "try, try again." As soon as the Christian world shows a united willingness to work as God requires, subjecting their carnal natures to his cleansing grace, and bringing all their intellectual and spiritual gifts to the altar, each one willing to be led by the spirit and to toil as Christ toiled, "going about continually doing good," the walls of Zion will speedily rise and the city of God will be built up in righteousness. In material architecture the stones are not found in the quarries already dressed for their places in the wall, neither in spiritual architecture are those

who "have a mind to work" always ready fitted for their sphere, but if passive in the hands of God as the stone is passive in the hands of the dresser, they will come out right and serve a purpose in the plan of God. Theodore Monod prayed, "Take me, break me, make me!" And all who will place themselves in that attitude before the all-wise master builder will soon find themselves in the niche they are designed to fill.

III. The *work*. 1. It was arduous. The people worked early and late. It was "from the rising of the morning until the stars appeared." No strikes for shorter hours and better pay. No one standing in the way of another one, or using violence to hinder others. All at it and always at it. They were too much in earnest to trifle, and too loyal to their nation, their families and to God to waste their time in useless parleyings.

2. It was diligent. They had no holidays or relief hours. They did not work hard for a week and then rest for a month. They kept right at their task until the evening of the 52d day, when the work was done and the places of their fathers' sepulchres were secure. Once they received a very polite message from one Sanballet to come down and meet him in one of the villages in the plains of Ono, but Nehemiah answered, "I am doing a great work, so that I can not come down. Why should the work cease?" And

it did not cease. They had no time for play. Likewise, when all the churches are as much in earnest for the conversion of the world, there will be no lulls nor periods of declension in the onward march of truth.

3. They worked amid great sacrifices. Some carried corn to keep others from starving. Some mortgaged their lands, houses and vineyards that they might buy food. Those who were at first disposed to accept usury from the struggling people, under the rebuke of Nehemiah surrendered their claims and exacted nothing. It was a grand exhibition of sacrifice from beginning to end.

What might not the churches of Jesus do under such a spirit? How quickly the petty rivalries and misunderstandings betwixt the Lord's workers would disappear under such a baptism of brotherliness as this of old! Verily our modern age knows little of real sacrifice. We drop our dimes or our dollars into the contribution plate, attend church, pray a little and testify occasionally, perhaps assisting somewhat in special revival occasions, calling this sacrifice for Jesus, but how few of us carry food to the hungry that we may gain their hearts, sell our property that we may discharge our stewardship, and by relinquishing our claims, however legal, to unnecessary accretions of worldly good, thereby show our allegiance to God and our devotion to our fellow men. We are our brother's keeper, yet we often fail to manifest a

brother's spirit. Thousands of professed Christians would do a good thing for themselves and for the world, if on bended knees they would study I John 3:14–24.

4. They toiled amidst many dangers. Nehemiah himself worked under threat upon his life, and was advised to shut himself up in the temple. The noble soul replied, "Should such a man as I flee?" No! True manhood stands firm and defies danger. It values honor more than life, and the good of the cause more than safety.

The workers were all harassed by abuse and threats, but "every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon." Their first business was to do the work, their second business was to fight for the privilege of working.

God's workers to-day have opponents, but the weapons of their warfare are not carnal. They are to be watchful against foes without and foes within, but keep on toiling. When the enemies of Nehemiah found that they could not arrest the progress of the work either by taunts or threats, they became "very wroth." Nothing makes men so angry as to find their abuse thrown away. Nothing is so becoming to Christian character as active watchfulness amidst dangers, and a serene, persevering spirit in the face of unjust opposition.

5. They were not diverted by calumny or ridi-

cule. Nehemiah was charged with treason, and his workmen with abetting it. But the reply was, "There are no such things as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart." Prayer then went up to God and the work went on.

A good lesson here for our age. In the struggles of labor and capital harsh things are often said and done, but the best way to meet them is to pray much and work on. Sooner or later the right will prevail. Brute force is unpleasant whether used with authority or against authority, but the force of a devout heart, prevailing with God, and of a sturdy arm, toiling in duty, is a kind which the world respects.

Encouragements. How can we gain this "mind to work."

1. Consider the need of it. Two-thirds of the people on earth are strangers to Christ. Two-thirds of the remaining one-third are destitute of a vital religious experience. Even those who enjoy experimental piety are not all resolute workers. The harvest is great, the laborers are few.

2. Consider the advantage of it. Work well directed always pays. Gospel work pays the best of any. Nothing else has benefited mankind like "the truth as it is in Jesus." Those who make this truth known are blessed in doing it, that is, they are themselves blessed while blessing others.

3. Consider the incitement to it. That which

has been done shows the possibilities before us. With only a few to work, and they not working long, nor always at their best, see what a beginning has been made. Christianity has a secure hold upon the world. The Lord's day is observed the earth around. The decalogue is embedded in almost universal law. The gospel is preached on every shore. Missions have been planted in every nation. God's praise is sung in every language. Heaven is being populated from every race and kindred and people and tongue. Jesus is the sweetest and best-known name among the sons of men.

4. Consider the reward. God does not ask us to work for nothing. He is a good provider and a faithful rewarder. He has set the example for work. Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." He wants workers and not idlers. He has told us how to render this service. The people asked Jesus: "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" Jesus answered: "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." This is plain. Believe in Christ. Imbibe his spirit. Be constrained by his love. Extend his truth. Make known his salvation. Live his life. Exemplify his power to save. Pray. Praise. Pay. Be true. Stand fast. Hold on. Die happy. Rest.

JACOB'S ANSWER TO PHARAOH, OR AN OLD MAN'S ESTIMATE OF HIS LIFE.

BY REV. LEVI MASTER, D. D.,

Pastor of First M. E. Church, Jackson, Mich.

Text: "And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Genesis 47:8, 9.

We have in this Scripture not only Jacob's statement of the number of years that he had lived, but also an estimate of his life. The question of Pharaoh seems to have brought up before his mind the whole history of his past. It rose before his mental gaze like the features of a landscape, over which he had been wandering like a pilgrim, from infancy to age. But the memory of it seemed to make him somewhat sad. One cannot fail to detect an undertone of melancholy in the utterance, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." Are the memories of age necessarily sad? Is age of necessity a melancholy period of life? We are pilgrims all in this journey.

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"Life is before you! from the fated road
You cannot turn. Not yours to take or
Leave the unknown way. Ye must go o'er it,
Meet ye what ye may."

It is true that many of us will never come into age, for long before the afternoon of life is gone, our pilgrimage will end. But some of us may have to journey on until the evening shadows fall and the evening stars come out. Must we of necessity look forward to a melancholy age, or is it possible that "at eventide there may still be light?"

I propose to notice some things suggested by the case before us which tend, if not arrested or counteracted, to make life in age dispirited or sad. And then over against these I wish to put some things, which if allowed to have their proper effect, will tend to make age glad. I have it in my mind that age, as a rule, ought to be the happiest period of human life in the world; that instead of looking forward to it with painful apprehensiveness, it ought to be to us a delightful prospect; that just as a summer evening is ordinarily the pleasantest part of the day and a summer sunset one of the most beautiful things in nature, so the evening of life ought to be quiet, and restful, and enjoyable, and beautiful. Notice, then, some things suggested by the life of Jacob which tend to make age somewhat sad.

1. It came so quickly on. It seemed to have

come prematurely on. He had not reached the age of his fathers, and yet he was an old man "whose gray hairs were going down with sorrow to the grave." The really energetic part of his life had gone. So it will be with all of us, if we are not careful to note the changes through which our natures pass, and some of these days, when the question shall be asked of us, "How old art thou?" we will be astonished to find that age is at hand with its silver locks and failing strength.

Now I can see how an ardent, energetic, ambitious nature might feel sad to find that age had stolen upon him unawares, and that the really effective part of his life had nearly all been spent. I can see how the man full of the spirit of great deeds and vast enterprises should feel sad to find that his nerveless hand was beginning to relax its hold on the enterprises of life, and that he was losing his grip on the affairs of the world. And particularly so if his life to some extent had been characterized by failure. No wonder that a man should feel sad to find himself far on in life, standing amid the ruins of his former plans, and now not time enough left to reconstruct them and push on to victory

2. Then again, age to Jacob was in some respects a period of disappointment. It does not seem to have been just as he desired, or expected that it would be. I have no doubt that he thought to live

and to die in the land of Palestine, surrounded by his children and his children's children, an increasingly numerous and prosperous posterity. But instead of that a mighty famine pressed them sorely, and a strange providence had brought them down to Egypt ; and so here he was an old man in a strange land, dependent to some extent upon the good will of a strange people. But his heart was still up there among the hills and valleys of the promised land, hovering around the graves of his ancestors and over that of his wife. And among the last requests that he made was that his remains should not be buried in Egypt, but that his sons should bear them up out of that strange land and bury them in the family burying ground at Machpelah and by the side of Leah, his wife.

So it is with many in age. It is a period of disappointment. In the budding springtime of life, it seemed to them that the summer would be full of beauty and the autumn rich with fruit, but now when the harvest is past and the summer ended, they are disappointed. It is not as they thought it would be. They are not where they expected to be. They are not surrounded as they desired they should be, and so they feel the sadness of a disappointment.

3. Another thing in the case of Jacob. He had come into age relatively alone ; the most intimate companionships of his early life had all been broken

up. Long years before this Rachel, his best beloved wife, had died; and then Leah, too, had passed away; and so here he was, an old man in a strange land, without the blessed fellowships of former years.

Thus it is with those who have come into age. Their early companionships have been broken up, their early associates have departed, and by and by they will be the only ones left of all that merry company of boys and girls who once played upon the village green. O ye who are coming into age, where are the companions of your earlier lives? Where are the fellowships of your maturer manhood? Where are the ones who used to walk beside you down the ways of life and afford you company? Did their departure leave no thought of loneliness behind?

4. Another thing that seemed to sadden the heart of Jacob in his age was the evil memories of the past. "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." I do not think that he used the word evil here in the sense of sinful, but rather in that more general sense of sorrowful, or calamitous. He meant to say that he had encountered many sorrows and misfortunes in his life, that the frequent recurrence of these things had saddened his entire history, and that the memory of them had saddened his age. Look at some of the evils which came to him. Early in his history he was obliged to flee from home and go into a strange land to escape the vengeance of his brother

Esau, whose enmity he had incurred. He never saw his mother after that.

In that strange land he gave himself to the service of a thankless master for seven years in order that he might obtain his master's younger daughter to be his wife, but at the end of that time was given the older of the two and compelled to work seven years more for the one of his choice. By and by his prosperity provoked the jealousy of Laban and his sons, and Jacob was obliged to escape by night in order to keep that which belonged to himself and his family. And so again we find him wandering as a stranger in a strange land. After this his life was saddened by the death of Rachel. And then there came that deeper sorrow occasioned by the thought that the wild beasts of the desert had torn in pieces and devoured his favorite son, Joseph. By this time the old man's heart was so nearly broken that he said, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning!" And thus the shadows deepened on his pathway, until he came to feel something like the poet in his poem of "The Raven,"

> "And my soul from out the shadow
> That lies floating on the floor
> Shall be lifted, nevermore!"

After all, I do not know that Jacob had more than the ordinary amount of human sadness in his life. Who does not have sorrow? Who can look

back upon his past life without the memory of days that were dark, and nights that were darker still? And if there were no thoughts or memories to counteract the gloomy memories of the past, all would be compelled at last to say, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been."

But now let us notice some of the considerations which tend wonderfully to relieve the sadness of age, and make it really a most enjoyable period of life. But first let me say that it is of the ordinary condition of life in age that I speak; just such an age as God designs we shall come into; just such an age as all of us should strive for, if God shall permit us to live. It is true that we can conceive conditions in age which are too sad for contemplation, and from which any man's heart would shrink. But we can conceive conditions in any other period of life too sad to think about; we can conceive conditions of child-life which are inexpressibly sad, but this is no argument against the general joy of the abounding life of childhood. We can conceive conditions for wifehood which are pitiable in the extreme; but that is no argument against the joy of such a relation, when the conditions are as they ought to be. And so, it is not of the exceptional cases, but rather of the ordinary conditions of life in age of which I speak.

Again, it is of the Christian man in his age of whom I speak. While the condition of the Christian

man in his age is coming to be more and more desirable in my mind, the condition of a wicked man in his age is inexpressibly sad. To stand on the bounds of life with no hope beyond ; to think that eternity is near, and without prospect of eternal life ; to be an old man, and yet without faith in God, is too painful for contemplation.

Allow me also to correct a mistaken notion as to the mental conditions in age. People are disposed to think that age, as a rule, is a condition of mental imbecility, and that therefore the aged person is incapacitated for enjoyment in life. Well, it sometimes happens that extreme age is associated with mental weakness, but this, in my judgment, need not be the rule, only the exception. In support of this, let me call your attention to the fact that most of the great men of the world who have come into age, and who have not ceased to exercise their mental faculties, have retained their mental strength. Look at William E. Gladstone, "the Grand Old Man," now in the eighty-ninth year of his age, and who, according to latest accounts, is nearing the end of his life, and yet, up to a few months ago, could think almost as clearly and strongly as ever. Nor had he suffered much loss in his oratorical power, for competent critics have said that in his great speech on the Armenian question, only a few years ago, he attained to heights of power only rarely surpassed even in his palmiest days.

Look at Tennyson, the late Poet Laureate of England, who died in the eighty-third year of his age, and whose rare poetic nature retained its strength and beauty to the last, and who, not very long before he died, and in anticipation of his death wrote :

"Twilight and evening star,
And after that the dark,
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.

And though from out our bourne of time and space
The floods may bear me far,
I hope to meet my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar."

Look at Bancroft, the historian of the United States, who continued to write in rounded periods after he had reached the ninetieth year of his age. These are only a few illustrious examples of the fact that men may retain their mental strength all through a very long day of life, and until the evening shadows fall and the evening stars come out. And I think it is in the plan of God that it should be so, and that if we were to live as God requires, it would, as a rule, be true, that, "though the outward man may perish, yet the inward man may be renewed, day by day."

And now having prepared the way, let us proceed with those considerations which tend to relieve the sadness of age, and to make it a really enjoyable period of life.

1. I have spoken of the sadness occasioned by the fact that age comes all too soon, and that it steals upon us at unawares, and that it tends to make a man feel sad that the opportunities of life are almost gone, and that so many of the ambitions of life have not been attained, and never can be now. But the piety of age corrects some of the false estimates of life which were held in earlier years. Life is no longer regarded as a time in which to accumulate great earthly fortunes, or to give to the world a brilliant history; but life is a pilgrimage from earth to heaven with opportunities of getting good, and of doing good by the way. And the thought which relieves the sadness is this, that the pilgrimage is nearly ended and the pilgrim is nearly home. What cares he now that age has come so swiftly on? It has only brought him the sooner to the place of his rest. Early in life he started on this pilgrimage, singing as he went,

> "There is a happy land
> Far, far away."

But now he knows it is not very far away; a day may unfold it before his gaze; an hour may bring it within the scope of his vision. Even now, by faith, he sees the city of God, just a little farther on, and has "sighted the golden gate," and it gives him joy.

2. I have said that to many age is a period of disappointment; and while this is so, it must not be

forgotten that the disappointment is chiefly in the realm of the secular; and that in the realm of the spiritual, and therefore of the higher things of value, there need be no disappointment after all. Nay, I am disposed to think that in no other period of life are the conditions so favorable for the possession and enjoyment of the richer spiritual experiences as in age. There can be no time when the heavenly attractions are so strong, and when the earthly ones are so weak, and the stronger prevailing over the weaker lift the old man into the more heavenly regions of experience. I think it was Bishop Janes who in the closing hours of his life said, "I am not disappointed." No, no, in the spiritual experiences of his life, the aged saint is not disappointed.

3. I have said that those who come into age come into it relatively alone, that is, they outlive their generation. Now there are two or three thoughts which tend to relieve the loneliness of age, caused by the fact that the companionships of early life have been broken up and the loved ones of other years have faded and died. One is that the farther on we go in age, the nearer we come to the renewal of some of those companionships which were so dear to us in the long ago. Another is this that, while earlier companionships have been broken up later ones have been formed; that while fathers and mothers have died sons and daughters have been born to us. And

the good old person is ordinarily well beloved, and can find as much comfort in the bosom of filial affection as he once did in the lap of parental love.

There is a special thought I would suggest right here; that those who are coming into age be careful to maintain youthfulness of spirit, so as not to come to be out of harmony with the society of the young. Make companions of your children and your children's children as soon as they are old enough to enter into companionship with you. One of the most suggestive pictures I am permitted to look upon from time to time is one entitled, "Grandfather's Pet," which represents an aged grandfather as happy in the out-going of his love for a little child. No man, however old, ought to want for society when there is so much of beautiful and abounding child-life around him.

"Come to me, O ye children,
For I hear you at your play;
And the questions which perplex me
Have vanished quite away.

"You open the eastern windows
Which look toward the sun,
Where the thoughts are singing swallows
And the brooks of morning run."

4. I have spoken of the sad memories which come to a man in age. Yes, it is impossible that a man shall stand away on in life and look far back into the past without the memory of sad events to flit across his vision, and fall for a moment like a heavy

shadow over his soul. But I have one or two things to say about that.

First, by a careful and honest life, a man may save himself from evil memories in his age. Jacob was responsible himself for some of those things which grieved him in life and whose memories saddened his age. He was responsible for the practice of those trickeries and dishonesties by which he deceived his blind old father and supplanted his brother. Whatever of sadness came out of that affair he was responsible for himself. Be guilty of nothing in your life the memory of which would give you pain in later years, or in a thousand years from now.

Again, let a man cultivate the habit of calling up the precious memories of the past rather than those which are sad. Life is not all shadows to any one; and life under ordinary circumstances with all of its possibilities is an inestimable blessing. Here is where Jacob made a great mistake. True, his life had had some evils in it, but oh, how much of good! No brighter vision ever came to any one than that which came to Jacob at Bethel. And if the providence of God had ever watched over the interests of any man, it had watched over the interests of Jacob. And so instead of speaking so sadly of his life to Pharaoh he ought to have said, "Although my life has not been as long as that of my fathers, it nevertheless has been very full of blessing." There are those of gloomy

disposition, who are always looking for the dark side of things. Of course, if you want to find the shadows you can find them on the brightest day that ever shone upon the earth. You may go to that side of the house opposite the sun and sit in the shadows all the day long, and at nightfall arise and say, "I have not had a moment's sunshine during all this day." And then there are those who are always expecting evil happenings, and who are always ready to say on the slightest occasion of evil, "It is just as I expected." The poet Moore represents one such character on the occasion of a disappointment as saying,

"Oh, ever thus, since childhood's hour,
I've had my fondest hopes decay;
I never loved a tree or flower
But it was first to fade away.
I never nursed a dear gazelle
To glad me with his soft, black eye,
But when he came to know me well
And love me, he was sure to die."

Thus it is, some are constantly looking for evil days and gloomy experiences, and so when they come into age have no memories of brilliant days and blessed experiences and joyous scenes. And my thought is that if a man will live a gladsome, joyous, Christian life, and will get as much of right good cheer out of it as possible, when he comes into age and looks back upon his past life it will be remembered as one long day of sunshine, with only now and then the

shadow of a passing cloud to flit across the scene. So live that if you come into age it may be to you like the evening of a long summer day, quiet, restful, enjoyable and beautiful, whose memories are precious, and whose sunset is golden.

"Only waiting till the shadows
Are a little longer grown,
Only waiting till the glimmer
Of the day's last beam is flown;
Then from out the gathered darkness
Holy, deathless stars shall rise,
By whose light my soul shall gladly
Tread its pathway to the skies."

LOUIS DELAMARTER.

FIRST M. E. CHURCH, KALAMAZOO, MICH

A HEART TO KNOW GOD.

BY REV. LOUIS DE LAMARTER,

Pastor of the First M. E. Church, Kalamazoo, Mich.

Text: "And I will give them an heart to know me." Jer. 24:7.

Jeremiah, the introspective and sad prophet, had a vision, in which he saw two baskets of figs before the temple of the Lord. One basket had very good figs, and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. And the Lord said: 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah."— "For I will set mine eyes upon them for good."— "And I will give them an heart to know me."

In this passage the specially beloved of the Lord were promised a heart-knowledge of God. The choicest of the people were taken captives to Babylon with Jeconiah, and these are represented by the good figs in the vision; and it is those who are promised "a heart to know" God. What is it to have "a heart to know" God? We usually associate the head, the brain, with the acquisition of knowledge. The intellectual faculties are universally considered

those by which we come to know things. What, then, is the meaning of this phrase, "a heart to know?" The term "heart," as used in Scripture, is a comprehensive word, meaning, in the last analysis, the selfhood of the individual, implying the activity of the intellect, the consent of the will and the warmth of the affections. The heart is the real Ego, the self in all its entirety. The significance, therefore, of this thought is that our entire self may have experience of a communion-life with God.

There is a knowledge of attributes and relations and operations. This is a common notion of the true realm of knowledge. We have a knowledge of governments; Monarchical, in which the will of the sovereign is supreme and his power absolute; Democratic, in which the people have direct voice in ruling; Republican, in which representatives of the people act for them in civil affairs. We have a knowledge of matter; its resistance, its cohesion, its specific gravity, its indestructibility, its attraction, its divisibility. We have a knowledge of motion, of electricity, of mind, of association, of ideas, of vibrations. This is exterior knowledge, without self-identification. I know something of the terrors of an absolute monarchy, a despotism, but it is an outside knowledge. I know something, from outside observation, of the force of gravity. I once saw a man fall from a tight rope and observed its result. I never fell from a tight rope myself, but

I have some knowledge of it and its consequences. I know something of electrocution, although I was never electrocuted. This is exterior knowledge which does not involve my selfhood.

But there is a knowledge of commingled life, of self-involvement. I know in a different sense something of republican government, for my entire life has been lived in it and I am involved in it. I know, in a special sense, something of joy, for I have felt it; of sorrow, for I have suffered it; of hope, for I have known it. This is heart knowledge, involving the real self in its acquisition and possession; embracing my intellect, my will, my affections.

"A heart to know," in the sense of the text, implies, further, accordance of temperament, the intermingling of life, a mutual giving and receiving of life, if you please. The true mother nestling her babe on her breast has "a heart to know" her child; and the babe itself early learns "to know" its mother, though ignorant of her attributes of mind or qualities of heart. It is a knowledge of individual self-identification, of mutual communion, of interchange of life. Your child lies sick in your home, very sick. Your physician knows its case, in some ways, better than you know it; but you know it as he does not. Your thought is absorbed in it, you think of it day and night. Your will is constantly bent on the care of it, business is of small moment to you. Your emotions

center at that bedside; your love is set upon that child. You have "a heart to know" that child and its case.

True heart knowledge implies mutual, responsive affection, and this is a gracious truth of the spiritual realm. To have "a heart to know" God is to have a selfhood in mutual responsiveness to God himself. It is conformity of nature, harmony of character, essential oneness of life.

So far as human relations are concerned misadjustment of hearts is the supremest grief of life. An arbitrary tying together of two lives does not make them one. The very tying may be their misfortune and their misery. Accordant temperaments make life sweet. A blending of selfhoods is necessary to the highest and happiest life. "A heart to know" in this supreme sense, that inner self-identification, that commingling of thought and purpose and affection, this is the secret of satisfaction, the key and inspiration of service, the very essence of life.

This principle is carried up into the spiritual realm, for it is an eternal truth-principle. There is "a great gulf fixed" between sin and God. Antagonism is friction, and friction is hell. The supreme misery of the soul is its falling out with God. To be arbitrarily tied to him by the laws of our dependent being does not afford happiness; it rather sharpens the thorns of pain. Misadjustment between the soul

and God is the supreme grief, the grief eternal.

To know God in one's inner, primal self is the only thing which will satisfy the soul. To understand the unsaid, to feel the unexpressed, is the province and the mystery of love. "A heart to know" the things which lie back of words, too holy for words, is the highest and sweetest kind of knowledge. While in no sense a dreamer I am still deeply impressed that there is an inner, a deeper world of the heart, whose machinery is noiseless and whose language is the soft, sweet, though sometimes sad, melody of songs without words.

The attributes of God are subjects of inferential and revealed knowledge. His power, his wisdom, his omnipresence, his eternity, his greatness! All these we have some idea of; but that does not feed my soul, nor satisfy my spirit, myself. Railroad engines by the score pass through our city every day with power enough to answer my purposes. I have sat before many men whose wisdom was sufficient for my needs. My own thoughts are omnipresent to my own selfhood. And in these facts are power and wisdom and omnipresence enough to satisfy my demands. I cannot think of a time when I shall not be; that is eternity enough for me. The arched sky, bending over me in grandeur, with its countless worlds in view and its boundaries ever moving on, shows me to be

but a mere speck. That is greatness enough for me to contemplate.

But do these satisfy my spiritual nature? No, no! A knowledge of God's attributes leaves me still hungry. I want "a heart to know" him. I want an accordant temperament with him. I want a self-involvement with my God. I want a self-identification with the life of God. To know God in the life of love and in the love of life is the cry of my soul.

Is such an experience possible? If not, the wreckage of human life is complete. If, when I am hungry, I am limited to the contemplation of the attributes, the quality, size, color, flavor, shape, of the luscious fruit before me, I shall surely starve. If I am shut in to a mere reflection on human companionship and love I shall surely know what hunger of heart is. If I am confined to mere head-work about God my soul is but an orphan crying in the dark. I must have "a heart to know" him, a selfhood harmoniously adjusted to him, a life essentially identified with the life of God, in sweet and commingled oneness with him. If the outsideness of things is all there is, then nothing is, life is a nightmare and selfhood a terrified dream.

Is it possible thus to know him? Evidently it is. God said to Jeremiah: "And I will give them an heart to know me." And Jesus not only distinctly declared and taught it over and over again, but he

lived its reality in actual life. The sturdy activity, the absolute surrender, the imperial courage, the dauntless faith, the sublime repose, these tell of a life which intimately knows God in commingled identity. Jesus said (John xvii, 5:22), in a supreme moment, the moment of prayer: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them (his disciples) that they may be one, even as we are one." God waits to be gracious. No, he does not wait; he comes down to fetch us up to him. Love never waits, it goes. By the gracious activities and offices of God, every one of us may have a heart to know God, in the undercurrent as well as the overflow of our lives.

Our life by itself is very small, though very frantic and much disturbed; but our life in God is very great, great in power and great in peace. And because of this we ought to strive for "a heart to know" God. Heart-knowledge of God affords nourishing food for the mind. What subjects are more inspiring to mind or ennobling to thought than the questions of the being of God, the nature of man, the power of truth, the questions of duty, of destiny, of opportunity, of hope? All other themes—geology, astronomy, zoology, art, commerce, sociology—important though they are in themselves, are little, very little, in comparison

with these which deal with the supreme things of the soul's life in God.

This knowledge of God gives proper direction and vigor to the purposes of life ; it commands the will to noblest ends. "If any man *will* do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "All things are possible to him that believeth." Heart knowledge of God directs and re-enforces the will. And such knowledge purifies and strengthens the affections. Like the dynamo yonder the affections drive the currents of life. What will not men and women do for love's sweet sake ? What element in man's nature risks so much, endures so much, achieves so much, sacrifices so much, suffers so much, as love ? The strongest passion of life is love ; the greatest thing in the world is love. And to lay this at his feet is to carry our greatest thing up into the holiest uses.

To have "a heart to know" God, therefore, is worthy the supreme search of the soul, the supreme service of life, the supreme surrender of the will, the supreme sacrifice of the heart. Let the thought be fixed on him ; let the purposes be set toward him ; let the affections entwine about him who is "the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely ! "

O Father, we have heard about thee, of thine

attributes of power, wisdom, justice and all that, and it is all very great and very terrible and very thrilling ; but we are afraid down here, and hungry. Take us up and give us a heart to know thee, in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen !

REDEEMED MANHOOD.

BY REV. JOHN P. ASHLEY, S. T. B., PH. D.,

President of Albion College, Albion, Mich.

Text: "I loathe my life; I would not live alway; let me alone; for my days are vanity. What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him, and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him, and that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" Job 7:16-18.

The great themes of contemplation in all the centuries have been God, man, and the world. All discussions concerning these subjects come under one of two divisions of universal thought, and must be treated either as a part of the theory of thought or of metaphysics. We propose this morning to confine our thoughts to man's status in the order of intelligent beings. To this end we have selected the view point of the patriarch Job on which to found the corner-stone of a philosophy of life. To reason we cannot turn with safety, unless the holy spirit of truth, that reveals God in all that is, shall inspire us with the thought indited upon nature's myriad pages of truth. From the time of Thales, the father of philosophy, to the present, men have followed the light of reason

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and it has left them in night. Many have followed the fainter lights of tradition and credulity, and have ended in superstition and skepticism. Human intelligence, clad in imperious garb, has stalked through the centuries proudly proclaiming that reason is the sole avenue to the courts of the divine temples of truth. Few, however, have found that it leads into the kingdom of righteousness, or of joy, or of peace.

We turn, therefore, to the biblical conception of man's relation to the world and God. Our experience in the world is such, the miseries of our life so many and deep, the problems of life apparently so unfathomable, that nothing short of a perfect theism can save us from practical skepticism in the day of calamity ; nothing less than an unflinching belief that God, in all the arrangements of the universe and in all the providences of the individual life, is good and only good. Job, in his earlier experience, stands as the representative of an imperfect philosophy of theism. He could not see infinite goodness in seeming calamity, and therefore failed to grasp his relation to the infinite tenderness of God and properly to understand the theory of life. On the other hand, the Psalmist voiced the belief that none of the so-called evils of life are occasions or causes for despairing pessimism. To live is a privilege and a pleasure in spite of dismal conditions and circumstances, because he may live in such blessed relations to God and the world.

1. We ask, both with Job, the pessimist, and with David, the optimist: "What is man that thou shouldst magnify him?" Where, in the gradations of intelligent life, does he rank? Many and various are the answers given. The materialist replies: "He is of the earth, earthy." The biologist replies: "He is the latest heterogeneous product of the homogeneous and primal protoplasm." Epicureans, stoics and sensationalists declare that matter will account for his origin, and for his mental, æsthetical and volitional attainments. Matter is his source and the grave his goal.

In reply thereto we affirm with Professor Ostwald, of Leipsic, that matter itself, in its last analysis, is but a manifestation of force. Matter of itself is nought but phenomenon. Matter, as an expression of force, is intelligible, but force or energy apart from the omnipotent God is unintelligible. The basis, therefore, of all cosmic life is the universal energy emanating from the infinite God and directed by him. Rising above the homogeneous mass of inanimate and inorganic life, we come to a higher plane of existence where force and matter have been crystalized into organism. Continuing in the scale of being, diversity and complexity confront us; diversity, showing itself in the existence of species; complexity, separating the species and elevating one above another. Again rising, species, touched with a measure of divine intel-

ligence, reach a plane of individuality, and thus the animal world is separated from the vegetable, not merely by the power of locomotion, but by the measure of its participation in the infinite intelligence and its complexity of organism. Indeed, all individuals rise in the scale of being only according to the measure of their participation in the divine intelligence. Thus we find complexity of organism keeping parallel with the increased intelligence of every species in the universe. The plane of being of the dog, the horse or the elephant is the expression of the measure of its participation in the infinite reason. The instinct of the animal life and of the lower forms of human life is but the leaping forth of reason, imprisoned and struggling for expression, in harmony with the all-pervading reason. Still rising in the scale, we come to the human plane, where reason, freedom and personality mark the individual. Below this plane reason has held and moved and guided every form of life, but here the individual is not exercised by reason, but exercises reason, and, for the first time, personality appears.

But is the chain of being now complete in me? In me, is matter's last gradation lost? Is the next step deity? Am I a worm or a God? Or is there a kingdom above me to which my present being is a stepping-stone? Are there higher planes to win, higher states to attain? Earth and heaven with their

myriad voices answer, "yes." Present humanity is not the ideal humanity. There is a new humanity of which the poets have sung and seers dreamed, philosophers written and men of God prophesied. The Psalmist looked forward to the realization of a human ideal through some mighty act of the omnipotent spirit and declares man's regal dignity: "Thou hast made him scarce less than God, and didst crown him with glory and honor; thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou didst put all things under his feet." He recites this Magna Charta of human dignity and reasserts his belief in the ultimate attainment of the perfect ideal with all the rights and honors inseparable from perfect manhood.

"Man God made of angel form erect,
To hold communion with the heavens above,
And on his soul impressed this image fair,
His own similitude of holiness,
Of virtue, truth and love, with reason high,
To balance right and wrong, and conscience quick,
To choose or to reject, with knowledge great,
Prudence and wisdom, vigilance and strength,
To guard all force or guile; and last of all,
The highest gift of God's abundant grace
With perfect, free, unbiased will. Thus man
Was made upright, immortal made,
The king of all."

"What a piece of work is man!" says Shakespeare, "how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! In

action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god!"

None of these descriptions of the ideal man are theoretical or mythical. *We* are not derived from species, as in the vegetable world, nor from the individual merely, as in the animal world, but "we are his offspring." "In him we live and move and have our being." "A little lower than God" we have been made, and the first characteristic of the new humanity is spirituality, transcending all the forces of the material world and all the powers of time and space. In its nature and relation to the universe, the immortal spirit transcends all time-measurements. "From the human soul, time can take away nothing that is sincerely good and perfectly divine. Mountains may crush, oceans engulf, lightnings strike, disease emaciate, and death destroy the body, but the spirit survives them all."

"The sun is but a spark of fire,
A transient meteor in the sky,
The soul—immortal as its Sire—
Shall never die."

Neither need this spiritual nature be dominated by the material. Gray, gruesome dungeons may limit the movement of the body, but the soul may even then walk unhindered in realms celestial. Physical power may hinder attendance at worship in earthly cathedrals, but 'tis the soul's prerogative ever to abide

in temples not made with hands. Neither can superior forces, spiritual or physical, overslaugh the soul's power of choice. All wicked men and evil spirits, all principalities and powers, may conspire against the Lord's anointed, but none can compel him to choose against his will. Satan and all the hosts beneath; Mammon and all its unrighteousness on earth can never compel an unwilling soul to abandon the purity, power and dignity of the new humanity. Freedom is an inalienable constitutive of personality and accountability. Without freedom personality cannot be, but it is a freedom through which man may rise to the rank of an ideal humanity or sink beneath the God-given plane of his normal state. Only as we choose to live in God, and become conscious of the infinite relations of our life, may we attain to the ideal of a redeemed manhood and to a blessed immortality. The Magna Charta of man's goodness is null and void to him who holds no fellowship with the Source of his soul. It is said that Daniel Webster, pointing to a street Arab said, "His soul is worth more than the physical universe." Thus it must be affirmed of the spiritual nature of every being. It is transcendently precious. Made of God and by him, and ever kept in life-giving relation to him, the soul is destined to return to him in his own likeness, to enjoy eternal fellowship with him. This is the reason the God Father doth so magnify man and doth so set his heart upon him.

2. We have thus caught not only a glimpse of man's rank in the gradation of being, and of his place in the spiritual world, but in this text we are also given a glimpse of his relation to the supreme God: "Thou visitest him every morning." The belief common to all the religions of the world is that the gods have come down and mingled with the sons of men. Odin, the highest and holiest god of the northern races, wandered o'er the earth in human guise to see what men were doing. So with Thor, the supreme god of Norway, who visited the earth to defend his devotees from the giants. Jupiter himself, and Mercury, his special messenger, both left their high abode and mingled with mortal men. So did Minerva and Apollo, Orpheus and Diana. Orpheus descended even into Hades for Eurydice. English mythology begins with the visit and reign of Albion, the son of Neptune, centuries before the Christ. American mythology begins with the descent of Gitche Manito, the Great Spirit:

> "Gitche Manito the mighty,
> He the Master of Life descending,
> On the red crags of the quarry
> Stood erect, and called the nations,
> Called the tribes of men together."
>
> (Longfellow.)

Thus from the earliest dawn of religious conception, it has been believed that the gods have descended to hold converse with the sons of men.

Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him. The reason we to-day dare hold a similar belief has already been assigned, namely, the divinely appointed plane on which we live. Man is a spirit, and the world in which he lives is spiritual. The world from which his soul derives its sustenance is spiritual. To one whose life has been expanded into a measure of completeness, the spiritual world not only is, but appears as a definite organization with its law of cause and effect, of trust, of faith, and of prayer, as is the physical world with its law of causation, of cohesion, and gravitation. If then, our souls have come into the consciousness that it is ours to live in a spiritual world as well as a physical, and if this blessed privilege has been realized, there is scarcely any limitation to the intercourse we may hold with God. He who has fellowship with the truth has fellowship with him who said: "I am the truth." The barren rocks of the centuries may thus become the medium of revealing divine truth. They speak to us of the divine thought and purpose in preparing the earth for habitation. True communion with any of the objects of nature is a communion with the ineffable thought of God. The soul is led to tell God how great and manifold are his works: "In wisdom thou hast made them all!" And if, perchance, through these communications with the thought of God revealed in his works, we may the better perceive his infinite good-

ness, then surely we have grasped the fact that God visits us and greets us every morning with the latest expression of his own love.

God does visit us in the perceptions of the soul. When blade of grass or leafy bough or rugged crag speaks to us of him who made them, they must be regarded as messengers from above. Whatever experience in human life speaks to us of divine goodness and of the all-conquering grace, or depicts the incomparable beauty of holiness ; whatever stirs the soul to aspirations after " whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report," must be regarded as a visitation from God. " For every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." The celestial heights and depths and breadths are open to us and challenge us to conquest, that every object on, above, beneath the earth, and every object in the seas and in the heavens may speak to us of God.

Thus related to the spiritual kingdom, we cannot be strangers in the universal commonwealth of God. It is this state and condition, this plane of life, on which the true brotherhood of man in Christ Jesus our Lord is possible. Below this plane of the new manhood, men are divided by spiritual things more truly than if separated by mountain range, but on the

plane of the new manhood, where all men are in conscious intercourse with God, none can be strangers, none can be foreigners, but all are at one, as the Father, through numberless avenues visits his redeemed and sanctified ones. True universal brotherhood cannot otherwise exist ; men are one and equal only upon the plane of a redeemed manhood. An ideal brotherhood is possible only as an ideal manhood is attained. The abnormal relations of the lower earthly life must be superseded by the true spiritual relations of the higher life. The lower relations of man in society must perish, but the higher relations of the new manhood shall abide forever. Yes, God does visit the sons of men. Every pang of contrition, every penitential tear, every high and holy resolve, every aspiration after true and better things, evidences a visit of the Most High. He comes and calls the soul that is engaged in the lower pursuits of a merely earthly life to a sense of its own incompleteness ; he comes to the worldling ; he comes to the sinner, and calls him up to a mountain of privilege, and converses with him and shows him the kingdoms that are yet to be conquered, the kingdoms that may be his. God does visit the sons of men. This one he calls up into the mountain of need, and shows to him the woes and despairs of the world, and bids him rise in the strength of the new life and become to it another Christ. These calls to the individual soul are

not self-originated. The condemnations and the approvals of the conscience are not earth-born. They are messengers coming immediately from the heart of God, bringing the Father's approval or displeasure. Conscience is an abiding testimony of our immediate contact with the heart of the Heavenly Father.

Yes, God does visit us, and points out to us our way in life. Perhaps you desire to become a messenger of mercy to weary pain-stricken souls lying in homes and hospitals? Do not think that your call to such self-sacrifices is born from within. It is the voice of the visiting spirit of God. Or you may be planning for India or Africa, and sometimes wrestling with doubt and struggling with difficulties, wondering if it be duty and if it be best. That call to desert strands and icy mountains is a visit of the Most High, calling to a providential field of service and self-realization. The out-going of the soul in aspirations after holiness, a perfect life, a transfigured spirit, a glorified self, the longing for godliness, are evidences of the Most High.

3. In any philosophy of human life, temptation has always seemed to many strange and inexplicable. In a true conception of the kingdom of God, however, temptation cannot be strange, but natural. Whatever is of worth, especially in the moral realm, must be tested and tried, and, under some circumstances, neither the tempter nor the temptation are necessarily

alien to the kingdom of God. Let us with Dr. Moulton enter one of the renowned sword factories where may be made the old Toledo blade. We watch the processes from the smelting of the rough material until there comes forth a highly tempered blade. The red-hot weapon is thrust into ice-cold water that it may be tempered. Has it stood the test? Is it brittle or flexible? Is it a blade to which one may trust his life? We pass through the finishing departments and we enter a room where we find a man of stalwart mien taking the almost finished swords and striking them over his knee. We watch him take down the sword; test it; break it. He takes down a second, and a third and a fourth and breaks four out of every ten he tries. Is he a friend or foe of the establishment? We think of our own armor factories, the Carnegie works at Pittsburg. There armor plate is produced. It is shipped to Newport, and there monster shells are hurled at it. Are they who seek to destroy this armor before it is placed on the sides of our battle ships, friends or foes of the government? Thus it may be that the tempter is but a tester, whose business it is to try and prove the agents of the kingdom of God.

Again we affirm, whatever is of moral worth must be tested, and so God comes and "tries us every moment." He tries us as Satan tried the Master in the hour of his wilderness temptation. Before us are

placed the goals of strength, truth, goodness, holiness, character. We admire them, perhaps we desire them, but they are placed there to try us, to incite us to their attainment. No man proceeds far toward the goal without discerning the presence of powers not born of himself, approving or disapproving his efforts. Vanity fairs may be on the right hand or on the left. Many siren voices may call us as we proceed on our way. Many hobgoblins may threaten us if we turn not aside, but the test will be made, and perhaps there are those of us who have turned aside from some straight and narrow way that leads to these great prizes of God, thinking, perchance, that there are less temptation and less trials in the less holy paths of life. How many multitudes struggling to enter the delusive paradise of those who are not willing to watch and fight and pray! How incessant the stream of men and women, who leave the rugged steeps of high and holy endeavor because it is less fatiguing to walk the malarious paths of the lowlands! Aye, and then we think of the larger procession of souls who have come from God and have returned to him. Every one of them has been tempted and tried. To speak of a soul is to speak of a tempted soul, a tried soul, a tested soul. But the trial and the test has not necessarily been alien to the kingdom of God. Nay, on the contrary, to tempt a soul may be but to enlarge and strengthen that soul. On the human plane all

of power is attained through struggle. The mathematical soul becomes mathematical through struggle; the musical soul becomes musical through struggle; the æsthetical soul becomes æsthetical through struggle; the purified soul becomes pure through struggle. The struggle is the measure of the test. All are born to struggle, to wrestle with *truths*, with *principalities*, with *powers*, both good and evil. It is ours to master and possess ourselves of the good as well as to triumph over the evil. Weaklings and sentimentalists may refuse to understand how God could try and tempt and test his children, but no man can be a child of God without such test. Even the son of his love could be reckoned as his son only as he "endured the cross and despised the shame." Temptation, soul-testing, is not sin. To be tested is not to be wicked. It is but to meet the conditions of our own spiritual existence and growth.

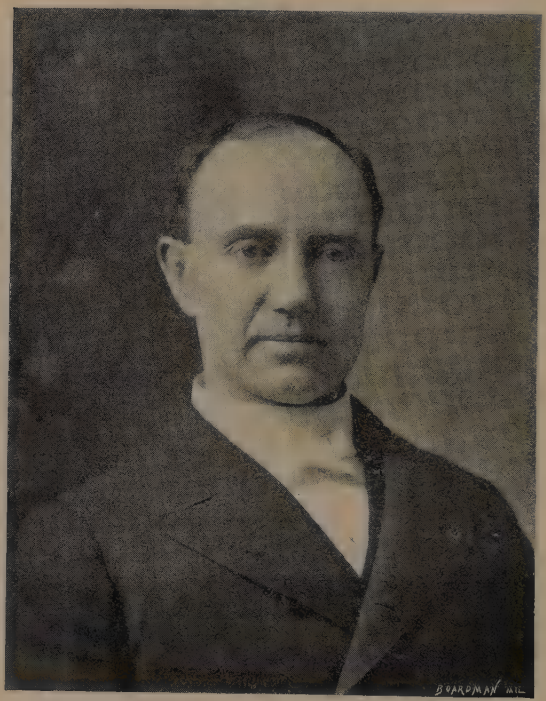
Further, the kind of temptation, the form of the test, is the clear index to the plane on which we live. In his perception of the strength of a soul Satan frequently outreaches himself. He lacks the capacity to perceive the strength of a pure soul reinforced by the omnipotent spirit. Leading the Christ into the wilderness of temptation he failed to perceive the dignity of his exalted spirit, and thus sought to tempt the ineffable spirit of the incarnate Christ with worldly considerations, by appealing merely to his worldly

appetites: "If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread." "Man shall not live by bread alone;" and Satan perceives that the plane of his temptation is too low for so divine a soul. And he lifts the plane of his temptation, and would lead him to presume upon the divine protection: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge concerning thee.'" And Jesus replied, "It is written." Again Satan perceives that his test is too low, and he lifts the tone of his test, and offers all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, if Christ will fall down and worship him. Jesus replied, "It is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'" Thus the kind and form of the test indicates the plane of life upon which we live. The epicurean and the worldling may succumb to the first kind of temptation. The Pharisee, with his intellectual presumption and conceits, is subject to the second form of temptation. But only the child of God, in touch with all the higher relations of the spiritual world, is exposed to the third and highest form of test.

And thus men come into an enlargement and growth of soul. The aim of life is to attain soul—larger soul, more soul, purer soul, diviner soul. All souls are made to order. The measure is given by the man himself. Souls are not presented to us as completely wrought out products, but as capacities, to be

realized and made actual according to the character of our own choice. Thus God, the Creator, comes; "he visits us every morning and tries us every moment," in order that we may have souls. "Stepping heavenward" means enlargement of soul, stepping hellward means shrinkage of soul. Becoming Christlike means soul enlargement, becoming un-Christlike means dwarfing of soul. Beyond the threshold of human life, therefore, our plane of being is self-determined. We may rise into the freedom, purity, power and glory of a redeemed humanity, having fellowship with God and dwelling evermore in his own immediate light, or we may sink ourselves to the plane of beasts and fiends. A new heaven and a new earth and a new humanity there must be. We are tried every moment, and every moment we choose the plane of our life. In the struggle for the highest life remember that

"God liveth ever!
Wherefore soul, despair thou never!
What though thou tread, with bleeding feet,
A thorny path of grief and gloom?
Thy God will choose the way most meet
To lead thee heavenward—lead thee home.
For this life's long night of sadness
He will give thee peace and gladness;
Soul, forget not, in thy pains,
God o'er all forever reigns."



PATRICK J. MAVEETY.

REMEMBRANCE OF GOD AND OBEDIENCE TO HIM THE PRIME CONDITION OF OUR NATIONAL PRESERVATION.

BY REV. PATRICK J. MAVEETY,

Presiding Elder of the Albion District.

Text: Deuteronomy 8:6–20.

Self-preservation is the first concern of men or nations; it is nature's first law. For this purpose nations have waged their greatest wars and made exhausting sacrifices. At the present time billions of dollars are being expended annually for standing armies, navies, forts and coast defenses, for the protection and preservation of national existence. Human ingenuity and skill are put to their utmost to invent and manufacture instruments of death and destruction, that this end may be more certainly assured. No nation feels secure without the latest and best modern appliances of war. So far as the powers of destruction are able to preserve us, we have little to fear. But, while we are expending so much money and thought upon the mere *physical* means of national preservation, it may not be out of place on our annual

day of thanksgiving to consider those sources of a nation's strength and greatness that are not material.

All will admit that the bulwarks of a great people are not monster guns, impregnable fortresses nor myriads of trained warriors. Our country can point with pride to the defenses which we have provided against invasion from without; and also to the fact that our land has an abundance of everything needful to supply all our wants and furnish the materials for an indefinite resistance; but these do not assure our national peace and permanency. To prophesy the future of any people we must go beneath the surface, we must examine the forces that are at work upon the characters of the men and women who make up the nation. No matter how great the mere physical protections may be, unless principles of righteousness, based on eternal truth, are wrought into the manhood and womanhood of a nation, it will surely be destroyed. Some there are who seem to think that national prosperity and perpetuity depend upon wealth and commercial advantages, but nations have not only gone down in spite of these, but have been by them accelerated in their downward course. God has given to us an immense heritage of field, forest and mine, of lake and river, mountain and valley, and he has poured in a chosen multitude, gathered from all nations, to people the land, and bring all its resources to perfection. It is our duty to consider how best this heritage

may be preserved and handed down to those who come after us; to lay broad and deep the foundations of its defenses, so that they may stand for all time against the assaults of its enemies.

How shall we do this? What are the defenses of nations? Can a nation live forever? Let us try to answer these questions. No people has ever succeeded in perpetuating its national existence for any length of time after the decline of its intellectual, moral and spiritual character; and no nation has ever been overthrown while in the possession of these. Those nations having these characteristics have ever been in the van of progress. Power and vitality depend more upon intellectual and moral qualities than upon numbers, force or wealth. The material, intellectual, moral and spiritual welfare of a people are so interwoven that it is impossible to separate them. They cannot be severed. They go up or down together. This is a material age. Our nation is young, growing and adding to its physical proportions so rapidly that it is in danger of trusting to its size and strength for future safety and permanence. It has all the self-conscious pride of healthful and prosperous youth. Its future greatness and its permanence depend upon the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual elements that are cherished and made a part of its life. It has all necessary physical powers, and it is rapidly developing an intellectual life that for one so

young is both creditable and hopeful for the future. While in many sections of our country there are large numbers of illiterates, and in all our large cities multitudes of the foreign populations cannot read or write the language of the nation, yet it can be said with pride that a healthy and useful system of common school education is within the reach of all, and is cheerfully and liberally sustained by the property of the country. For our material and intellectual advantages and opportunities we ought to be deeply grateful. But must we not pass on to something higher, better and more necessary than these? Are we to depend upon the material and the intellectual alone? Let us remember the story of Greece and Rome. They were strong physically and intellectually, but this did not save them from overthrow. The lack of moral and spiritual character was their ruin. There is danger to the nation in an undue dependence upon our material resources and our intellectual smartness. The cultivation of the moral and spiritual cannot be neglected without evil consequences.

I am not here to argue in favor of any particular form of divine worship. I do not advocate a national form of religion, nor a uniform creed; but I feel that there is danger from the encroachments of that worldly spirit which, without positive unbelief or religious antagonism, even in the midst of a seeming friendship, ignores the obligations and responsibilities of the re-

ligious nature. It is not so much that I fear downright infidelity and open, gross immorality ; these are plain, tangible enemies that can be seen and battled against. It is when men consent to the commandment that it is good and yet go their ways, utterly neglectful of its observance that they grow depraved and sow the seeds of destruction. A day of national thanksgiving to God for all his benefits is a fitting recognition and a national expression of faith in things spiritual and eternal, but unless this is followed by an honest effort to obey God, and to provide for the cultivation of a true reverence and respect for him in our private and public affairs, our day of public thanksgiving is a farce, a mockery. Hypocrisy is worse than open infidelity. If the nation is to be benefited by religious truth it must be wrought into the lives of the people, and used to shape and fashion our laws, customs and habits. The forces that operate to destroy nations are from within ; they belong to the life of the nation ; they are diseases and must be combated from within. Whatever tends to weaken the physical, intellectual or moral powers of a people is an enemy and must be opposed and overthrown. Ignorance is the mother of much vice. It is responsible for many of our physical ills, and stands in the way of all progress. No nation can attain any degree of greatness and remain ignorant. It may grow in numbers, and some of its people may attain to im-

mense wealth and to a rude and barbaric magnificence; but like China, it only awaits the coming of some sturdy little champion to be trampled in the dust, and but for the interference of others wiped out altogether. Or like Turkey, stand not by its own strength, but by the jealousy of those who have not come to an agreement as to the division of the spoil.

Our common school system provides for the destruction of ignorance, and attendance thereon should be made compulsory upon all. No one should be permitted to grow up in ignorance in this land, and no one coming here from a foreign country should be allowed the privileges of citizenship until he has learned to read and write in the language common to the nation. The nation owes it to itself to protect itself against the consequences of an ignorant mass of voters. Intelligence and knowledge must be brought into the decision of all our great questions. An ignorant and wrong decision of some important public question, or the election of an unwise and reckless Governor or President, might plunge the nation into disastrous strife, from which years of wise administration would be necessary to relieve us. The religious spirit, with few exceptions, has ever fostered culture and education of the best sort. The time was when nearly all art and literature was inspired by the religious instinct. The nation can depend upon the religious element of her population to support her

efforts for the enlightenment and education of all her children. Religious fervor and interest have contributed millions in every land for the endowment of schools and colleges, in order that God might be known in all his works and worshiped in an intelligent manner. Ignorance is as much the foe of all true religion as it is of a successful national life, and when the State educates its children or its citizens it is doing a religious duty. Nearly three thousand years ago God said through one of his prophets, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee." Hosea 4:6.

It has sometimes been more than hinted that there is an antagonism between religion and the higher forms of knowledge. No true religion has any reason to fear the light of reverent and unprejudiced scientific investigation. Ignorance has shrouded religion in mystery and superstition, has added dogmas not of God, and then has stood guard with flaming sword lest intelligence should break in and drive out the false intruders. A false and ignorant form of worship may be better than none at all, but it is only when man intelligently understands his relation to God and comprehends eternal truth that he can worship with profit to himself and to the nation of which he is a part. An ignorant worshiper is to the church what an ignorant citizen is to the State. It is to the

interest of both religion and the State that men be educated; that they may be an intelligent part of the citizenship of the State, and of the purified and refined citizenship of the kingdom of God. Any other conception of Christian manhood and womanhood is false to man and false to God. An intelligent Christian, a true worshiper and follower of God cannot but be a better citizen. The spirit that animates Christianity is directly opposed to all those forces that destroy the physical, intellectual and moral vigor of any people. It can easily be shown that great and widespread revivals of religion have invariably been followed by a vigorous and healthful national life; that intelligence and prosperity also have succeeded. The national life of the Israelitish people rose and fell with their devotion to their God. Moses was not only a prophet, but a wise statesman when he said to the people, "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day,—if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyed before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God." The history of Christianity is full of confirmation of this warning. Western Asia, including Armenia, Northern

Africa and South Eastern Europe are in the deadly grip of the Turk to-day, because they failed to recognize the value of a pure and simple worship of God, and put in its place a corrupt mixture of pagan forms, superstitions and practices, and imposed this in the name of religion upon peoples whom they found in ignorance and kept them so. The new life of Europe following the Reformation, the ideals of liberty that spread through Switzerland, France, Germany, Holland, Scotland and England can be distinctly traced as consequences of the religious impulses of those times. The English Puritan, the French Huguenot, the Scotch Covenanter, born and bred in the atmosphere of religious devotion and enthusiasm, will always remain types of the ideal materials out of which to make a great nation. They were the first emigrants to this new land of promise. Rigid and uncompromising in their devotion to their religious ideals; unduly severe, perhaps, in their views of social life, nevertheless they laid foundations for our national life as solid as the rocks on which the everlasting hills are built. And if we, the inheritors of the land they subdued and made free, do not forget the source whence they drew the inspiration that made them worthy of record, we shall build upon the foundation they laid a structure to our honor, and one that will last forever.

The true worship of God exalts a race, and gives it the elements of perpetuity. The hope of a future

home and blessedness and purity, to be attained through faith in a Being who is all-wise and all-good, cannot but be a most powerful stimulus to a life of goodness and purity. The imagination is wrought up to its greatest height in efforts to picture the beauties and glory of that eternal world. All minds are exalted by the thought of it. The merest babe is delighted with pictures of its inhabitants. Savages are awed and subdued beneath the spell of its unheard-of magnificence, and their fierce natures are broken into gentleness by the awful power of its Ruler. High and towering intellects like those of Dante and Milton find fields for the exercise of their imperial genius amid its angels and demons. Art and literature alike never weary of picturing and writing of its wonders. Nowhere else do they find materials equal to the highest impulses of their genius. The Christian world with its manifold wonders of civilization is a silent but powerful testimony to this exalting influence of Christianity. It found us savages, and it has made us better than kings.

Christianity stimulates and encourages every virtue, and sets its face against every vice. Although occasionally through ignorance some of its professors have been found on the wrong side, yet it is true that the most powerful arguments on the side of human progress, liberty and right, have been drawn from the pages of its Book, and have been uttered by its minis-

ters. When it has championed a cause it has known no defeat. Its spirit of self-sacrifice has furnished the world with its greatest heroes. Its broad and world-wide missions and philanthropies have brought the human race together, and have done much to allay the bitterness of national rivalry. Its doctrine of a common fatherhood in God, and a common brotherhood in man, has resulted in wiping out human slavery and increasing the sum of human affection. Its recuperative force has been felt in times of moral decay, when righteousness seemed to be at a discount and vice at a premium. Its doctrines enlighten and strengthen every movement for good, while they strike at the root of every evil. It is the uncompromising enemy of whatever hurts or destroys a human life, and the fast and faithful friend of whatever helps to lift man up to a better and higher manhood.

If it is thus true that a pure and intelligent worship of Almighty God powerfully aids to strengthen and preserve a nation, and that without it men are apt to lapse into a sort of civilized selfishness that is not as good as sheer savagery, how careful ought we to be that we do all in our power to save that worship from being forgotten or neglected! If our great corporations, employing hundreds of thousands of men, and our government, employing hundreds of thousands more, forget the one day in seven set apart for spiritual culture and worship, and force their men

to work on that day, thus depriving them of the only opportunity to cultivate their spiritual natures, and these men thus thrust out into the battle of our complex life drift into the maelstrom of anarchy, communism and nihilism, and afterwards turn their hands against those who denied them the civilizing and refining influences of Christianity, they will learn when it is too late that man without religion is a savage. The history of the French Revolution is a standing monument to the folly of expecting reverence and respect for liberty and law in a people who have dethroned God, and put a harlot in his place. We may not go so far as formally to declare the Sabbath abrogated and vote God and his religion to be nothing but a fairy tale, yet practically the same result is reached when we forget him, turn his day into one of profit and pleasure, instead of one of rest, meditation and worship, and if our children and the children of those whom we have lured away from God sink deeper and deeper into depravity and vice, the time will come when the full penalty of such sins will be visited upon our country. In order to counteract the tendencies of our times towards worldliness, luxuriousness, neglect of God and the higher spiritual nature, let us "lift up our eyes toward the hills from whence cometh our help." Make this a day of thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father for his great goodness to us. Let us pledge him a more faithful service. Our coun-

try needs our prayers and our examples. To be loyal to our country is to be loyal to our God. If we desert him he will leave us to our own devices; if we are faithful to him he will stand by us. To make a nation happy, prosperous and permanent, it is not enough that it be broad, rich and populous, it must be righteous; and righteousness as a national characteristic has never yet shown any vigor except where it is fostered by religion. The conditions of national perpetuity are as fixed as the rocks that underlie the mountains. We cannot change them, we can only conform to them, or suffer the consequences. If we remember our God and obey him with all our heart, there is no power in earth or hell that can overcome us, but if we disobey and neglect him we shall pass into the same oblivion that hath swallowed up so many great and powerful nations before us. May we heed the lesson of the ages before it is too late.

STRATEGIC SCRIPTURE TEACHINGS REGARDING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BY REV. FAYETTE L. THOMPSON,

Pastor Central M. E. Church, Lansing, Michigan.

Text: "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." Acts 2:16.

Pentecost was an enigma even to these devout dwellers at Jerusalem, precisely as pentecostal blessing and pentecostal power is more or less of an enigma to many present-day disciples. Peter found it necessary to defend these Spirit-filled worshipers against the charge of drunkenness, and by his quotation from Joel forevermore fixed Pentecost as fulfilled prophecy. It is worth noting that substantially the same quotations may be found not only in Joel, but in Isaiah, in Ezekiel, in Zachariah; so that Pentecost is thus immovably builded into the age-long structure of Christian truth. Pentecost was the great time manifestation of the Holy Spirit, and this time manifestation was thus sharply marked simply because it was the inauguration of his age-long ministry. Peter affirms that this time-ministry was the subject of prophecy, and there-

CENTRAL M. E. CHURCH, LANSING, MICH.

Jayne L. Thompson

fore Pentecost was not simply an incident in the life of the infant church, but a vital and dispensation-lasting portion of the divine program of redemption. From the vantage ground of this passage, and with this historic and prophetic setting we are to take a rapid survey of some strategic scripture teachings regarding the Holy Spirit.

There is a person, omnipresent in the Bible, known under various names as the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of God, and simply the Spirit. Many variations in these names are of frequent occurrence, but the person is always clearly indicated. He appears abruptly, without introduction or explanation. We find him first in creation, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water;" literally, brooded—the figure of a mother bird upon her nest covering the nestlings and warming them into vigorous life. He is found occasionally throughout the entire Old Testament at important epochs and in connection with history-making characters. Something like eighty-eight times specific Old Testament declaration presents him to our view. The Spirit of God filled Bezaleel and his associates, giving them peculiar mechanical skill in the work of the tabernacle. The Spirit of the Lord upon Moses and the seventy elders made it possible for them to prophesy. When Gideon was being fitted for his matchless task the record is that the Spirit of God came upon, lit-

erally "clothed himself with" Gideon, and immediately preceding the account of Samson's marvels is the record that the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him. It is the same affirmation again and again regarding Saul, regarding David and the long list of mighty prophets.

In the New Testament he occupies a far more important and marked place. Something like two hundred and sixty-two times he confronts us and always under most profound honor and reverence. It is the Holy Spirit who coming upon the Virgin makes possible the birth of Jesus. It is he who, coming upon Christ at his baptism, equips him for his mission among men, leads him into the desert for the devil-test, and makes possible our Lord's return from the wilderness "in the power of the Spirit." He it is whom Christ introduces to his disciples as his successor, and it is for his down-coming the apostles are bidden to tarry at Jerusalem. He did come, and under his impulses the disciples and early church made history during that first Christian century that has not been surpassed, perhaps not equaled, during all the generations since. He did come, precisely as Christ affirmed and in the very process of his coming Peter stood up and assured the wondering onlookers that "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." He might also have added, "This is that which was spoken by all the

prophets ; this is that which has been the expectation of all the generations of the faithful ; this is that for which our Lord bade us tarry and in the power of which he commanded us to go forth even unto all nations. *This* is *that.*"

It is well to observe closely some sharp distinctions between the Old and New Testament manifestations of the Spirit. In the Old Testament the Spirit operation seems to be elective. Here and there a single individual of marked greatness and power is selected as the channel of his coming. Ordinarily only one in a generation, perhaps only one during a number of generations. The mass of the people know nothing of the Spirit of God only as they see him manifest in some typical representative. But in the New Testament this is all changed. In the New Testament he is "poured out upon all flesh." All believers are to receive him. His mission is not now to the few, but to the many.

Then in the Old Testament the Spirit operation is occasional. Now and then with long intervening absences he is known to the chosen people. Even those individuals who seem to be chosen as his peculiar instruments do not know him continuously. He comes upon them for some mighty purpose and when that is accomplished he as suddenly departs, leaving them "like other men." But in the New Testament he comes to stay. "He shall abide with you forever."

He is an occasional guest no longer, but has now come to make his home with us.

Most peculiar of all is the fact that in the Old Testament slight notice seems to be taken by the Spirit in his operations regarding the personal character of those through whom he works. The Spirit comes upon some men who are not good men at all and mightily uses them in the very midst of their badness. Close study will unvail a number of such instances that will be likely to stagger our thought for a moment. Unquestionably he did now and then use bad men through whom to work his pleasure. In the New Testament this is sharply otherwise. He dwells only in a clean temple, but it is his coming that cleanses that temple. It is worse than folly to affirm that he never comes into a human heart until that heart is clean. Were that true a pure heart were impossible, because his coming is the sole power in all the universe that can so apply the blood of cleansing as to produce a clean heart. His coming means cleansing, and to shut him out until the cleansing has been accomplished is to exclude the cleanser. These are some sharp distinctions that careful thinkers cannot afford to overlook.

We call this "the dispensation of the Spirit." What do we mean? What does that oft repeated phrase signify? Simply that during all the generations between "the going into the heavens" of our

Lord and "his coming again in like manner" the Holy Spirit is in authority in the church, is the companion of all disciples, and is the convicting agent in the world. It is his power and his alone that is to apply and administer all Christian things. Three great truths of transcendent present-day importance are here involved.

He is the *life* of the church. All that the vital life principle is to the physical body, all that is the Spirit of God to the body of Christ. Without him the church becomes an ecclesiastical club. He sits in the church as the Bishop of souls. He appoints all true church officers, and officers not of his selecting are an offense to him. Of the first church election ever held we have this description of the men chosen: "Of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." Paul tells the elders of the church at Ephesus to their faces that the Holy Ghost has made them overseers in the church, and for that reason they are to take heed to themselves. The Holy Spirit calls pastors and sends forth missionaries, "and they being sent forth of the Holy Ghost, departed." The same authority presides over and dictates the verdicts of church councils. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." The Holy Spirit orders the services in church from the "doorkeeper in the Lord's house" to the most exalted officer in the sanctuary, and whoever occupies his place by other than the appointment of

the Holy Spirit is a usurper and an offense unto the body of Christ. It may occur to some of you that this program is very far from being realized in the churches of to-day, and with the deepest sadness the conclusion is frankly confessed. However, the divine directions still stand, and in just so far as our ecclesiastical machinery repudiates the Holy Spirit as the sole authority among disciples and sets up methods of its own in the place of the methods of the Spirit, by just so far is the Holy Spirit forgotten, ignored, surely grieved, perhaps crowded out, possibly quenched. This whole program of churchly administration is that which was spoken by the prophets.

The Holy Spirit is the *transformation* of believers. "The world knoweth him not because it seeth him not; but ye know him, because he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." All individual peace, all personal conquest, all courage, all fidelity, all fellowship and soul-quietude come only when he comes and indwells. Everything that marks the oceanic distinctions between profession and possession; between a nominal church membership and a vital union with the Son of God; between a compromising time-serving and crystal-clear loyalty; between a flabby, meaningless "churchianity" and a new creation; everything measuring these tremendous distinctions may be summed up in the disciple's individual relationship to the Holy Spirit. Are not many of us feeling that in

some way we are not getting the utmost out of the gospel? Are we not feeling with deep regret that the mission of the Son of God, as set forth in the Word, promises more of peace and victory and power and sin-conquest than as yet we have appreciated? Now and then do we not catch glimpses of attainment far beyond our practical experiences? Such dreams in holy moments come to not a few of God's dear children. Beloved, we hold this morning the golden key that will unlock every barred door holding us back from all the fullness of God. This indwelling of the Holy Spirit is that individual transformation spoken of by the prophets.

The Holy Spirit is the *conviction* of the world. "He shall reprove the world." Reprove is entirely too weak a word. In the margin of your Bible you may read "convince;" in the Revised Version you will find "convict." The original word has in it the idea of a conviction that shall issue in a deep consciousness of sin and in a godly repentance therefor. How is this heedless, unbelieving world to be brought to a knowledge of its sins and turned with breaking heart and streaming eyes to the cross of Christ? Will eloquent sermons and faultless logic and polished argument suffice? Are we to persuade men to be Christians as we persuade them to be Republicans or Democrats? Are our appeals to men to be upon a natural or a supernatural basis? God forgive us that

so frequently we have gone about producing supernatural results with natural means. Absolutely nothing save the conviction of the Spirit of God will break down stubborn wills, melt stony hearts, open blind eyes and issue in a repentance that needeth not to be repented of. The sinner's emotions may be stirred by pathetic stories and some surface reformation produced; his mind may be won by irresistible logic and argument until he yields an intellectual assent to accredited theology; his social instincts may be touched until he sees in the organized church desirable society advantages; all these things may exist without one atom of scriptural repentance, without one grain of saving faith. The repentance that repents, the conviction that convicts, and the faith that saves, come only by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

These are strategic teachings of God's Word regarding the Holy Spirit. What folly, then, for the organized church to forget him and to order her life upon plans of man's making! What folly for the individual disciple to seek peace and power from the world, from worldly fellowships and worldly conformity! What folly for Christian workers to seek the salvation of men as politicians seek votes! What folly, nay more, what awful effrontery to the Spirit of God for any one of us to ignore him in any of the movements of our life of faith!

J. C. FLOYD.

MARTHA AND MARY.

BY REV. J. C. FLOYD, D. D.,

Presiding Elder of the Kalamazoo District.

Text: "Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Luke 10:38–42.

These two women are mentioned three times in the gospels. They are two sisters who lived together, both good women, Jesus' followers. Martha seems to be the older and mistress of the house. When Jesus passed through their village she offered him the hospitality of their home and he received it, and in this scene before us he is her guest. And for the comfort and proper entertainment of her guest Martha was doubtless very anxious. She would honor her gracious visitor and minister to his wants. Hence, she gave herself to her household duties. We may presume

she invited her guest to the best room, gave him the easiest chair, placed before him some books and pictures for his entertainment, and then excused herself to attend to domestic duties. This is not just what she did, perhaps, but whatever she did was probably the proper courtesy of the occasion as she understood it. What her domestic duties were we do not know; whether they were really necessary and urgent we are not sure, but we may suppose they were. They were duties, we may presume, that were needful to be done, and their end was to minister to the comfort and necessity of her guest. And in all this Martha deserves our commendation. We ought to speak well of her, for she had the purpose in her heart to minister to her blessed Lord in touching services of the hand.

And we see it so in the church to-day. There are some kinds of work in the church other than prayer meetings, revival meetings and public worship which are important and must be done, for if not done prayer meetings, revival meetings and public worship will not be possible. There are certain temporalities connected with the church necessary to the holding of these services. And we could not get on in the church without Martha's service. Somebody must do it; somebody must stand at the base of supplies; somebody must provide the munitions of war; somebody must serve tables, and sweep the church, and feed the

furnace, and light the gas, and see to it that the house of God is made ready and kept ready for its guests, made ready and comfortable for its proper uses; where all who come may sit at Jesus' feet and hearken to his word. It appears that Mary did not do her share of the domestic duties, and Martha seems justified in making some complaint. And the same complaint could be made to-day. There are scores of people who like to have a comfortably warmed and pleasantly lighted church—a place where they may go and enjoy religious service, but they leave it for somebody else to do the duties of the house, the work of the hand, the giving of the money to make it possible to worship there. People can grow in grace in a prayer meeting, and there are some also who can grow in grace during the taking of a collection. But to grow in grace both in a prayer meeting and a collection, to enjoy both, and rejoice to participate in both,—this makes pretty nearly the perfect Christian.

But there is something in Jesus' answer to Martha's complaint that may cause a few moments' meditation. Her complaint was against her sister who had been sitting at Jesus' feet, and she urges Jesus to rebuke her. But instead of chiding Mary and sending her to household toil, Jesus' words unmistakably convey a gentle rebuke to Martha, very delicately administered, and a very marked commendation of Mary. What does it mean?

We must bear in mind that these two women were both the friends and disciples of Jesus. And we may believe that Jesus fully recognized Martha's desire to honor him. But he must have seen also that her *chief* concern was for her household duties. She gave *all* her attention to them and had no time to sit down with her guest. Anxious to get bread for him, she had no time to get bread *from* him. In her anxiety to get him meat and drink she forgot that he himself was meat and drink—the bread of life and the water of life to her soul. It was right for Martha to attend to household duties, but not right to neglect more important things. Her mistake seems to be in the fact that while she sought to get the body bread, she left her soul to go hungry. Many people are doing that very thing in these times, toiling so earnestly for earthly treasure that they have little time to seek heavenly treasure. It is right that business be done, it must be done, and to do it properly is just as religious as to attend a camp meeting. But the danger is in becoming too much engrossed in earthly things and giving too little attention to the soul. I say it is right to do business; right to provide for our family; right to secure a home and something in store for old age, but these very right and proper things may become snares to our souls. Our earthly comforts will be too dearly bought, if to get them we sacrifice the blessings of salvation here and eternal life hereafter.

There is such a thing as busy activity in religious work, while the cultivation of personal soul-graces is neglected. We may suppose that Martha was busy serving Christ. Every minute she spent was in toil for him. But that service did not rest her heart or feed her soul, and while that service was necessary something else for her heart and soul was necessary also, and this she could not do without. It is possible to be very busy in religious work, to have the mind and hand engaged day and night in needful church work, and the soul be lean and hungry all the time. There are too many who shirk responsibilities in the temporal things of God's kingdom. They are less active than they ought to be, they give less money than they ought to the support of the church, less than they ought to the cause of missions and other benevolences. If all professing Christians were like them there would be fewer churches than we now have, fewer missionaries in heathen lands, fewer charities supported in our cities. But these people are not all doing as Mary did. They are not devoting their time to sitting at Jesus' feet and hearing his word. If they were, we might expect some very practical results in offerings made at Jesus' feet. The next time that Jesus came into this village where these two women lived, just a week before his death, Mary came with an alabaster box of ointment, very precious, and made it an offering of heart affection to her Lord.

And that is the practical outcome in the lives of those who truly sit at Jesus' feet and truly hear his word. They devote themselves to generous services for their Master.

Jesus gently reproved Martha when she made complaint to him. The reason for it was not that he was displeased that she gave attention to household duties, but that she gave *all* her attention to them and had no time for her higher self. He saw that she was giving no attention to the needs of her soul, and this he said was the *one thing needful*—the one indispensable thing. There are many things we think are needful, and they may be good and helpful, adding to our happiness here, but they are not *needful* as Jesus means in this case ; they are not indispensable. Without them multitudes are happy here and will reach eternal happiness hereafter, while with them all—money, honor, position, etc.—many are miserable here and will go down in misery hereafter. The *one thing* we need is Christ in the soul, the hope of glory. And to get this we must imitate this simple woman and sit at his feet and drink in his gracious words until our hearts are touched by his grace and transformed by his power. Soul communion with Jesus Christ is our greatest need.

Four hundred years ago, and more, a German monk, walking in the cloisters and gardens with his companions, all at once would stop and say : "Dear

brethren, I must go, some one is waiting for me in my cell," and Thomas a' Kempis would hasten to his cell to sit at Jesus' feet. If he had not, he never would have written the "Imitation of Christ," a book which has probably been read more, and has been helpful to more souls than any other book in the world except the Bible. That man did more for the world sitting at Jesus' feet in his cloister cell than he ever could have done in any other way. John Bunyan did more for the world sitting at Jesus' feet in Bedford jail and writing Pilgrim's Progress than he otherwise ever could have done. No more important years in the life of the great apostle perhaps were ever spent than the two he passed in the wilderness of Arabia before he really began his work, for without those years he would never have been the chief apostle; and no more important years did Paul ever expend in behalf of the church than the two he abode in chains in the Roman dungeon, sitting at Jesus' feet and penning some of his matchless epistles, which have helped to establish the faith and stimulate the zeal of Christian people in the generations following. Retirement—retirement from the world, into a desert place, into the closet, anywhere from the rush and push of the grinding machine of business and domestic duties, and society whirl—this is necessary for highest spiritual attainments. A time for meditation is needful—a time for prayer. Martha did not seem to think of this, she

did not seem to think that Jesus came to minister, not to be ministered unto. He came to give himself, not to take unto himself.

Then we must imitate the younger sister. If she neglected many things, she got the one thing needful. And Jesus said she chose the good part. It brought contentment to her soul, while to her sister there was trouble, anxiety and petulance. Yes, while we need Martha's active hand, we must have Mary's loving heart. Jesus said: "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." These words teach us how important it is to make the soul's welfare our chief concern, while the things of time and sense may have and should have less attention. They may have attention, but they should not have so much as to leave insufficient time for the soul's welfare. The religion of Christ is the soul's need and abiding comfort. It is good always and everywhere—in health and sickness, in wealth and want, in life and death, in time and eternity. It shall not be taken away. The freeman may be overtaken by his enemies and lose his liberty; the strong man by sickness and lose his health; the rich man by disaster and lose his property; the learned man by infirmity and lose his mental powers; the good man by calumny and lose his reputation—all these things which men are anxious for may be taken from them, but the Christian's inheritance can never be taken away. A man may cast

away his heavenly inheritance and beggar himself eternally, but all the powers of evil in earth or hell or sky cannot take it from him. These are riches which cannot be *taken away*. They will comfort a man in this life, go with him to the grave, stand with him in the judgment and remain with him forever.

This is the good part which may be chosen. And if ever secured it *must be chosen*. Christ will not force himself upon the heart. God will not thrust his saving grace upon the soul. Jesus will stand at our heart's door and knock, but we must choose to lift the latch and let him in. He will not force the door. God will offer us salvation without money and without price, but we must choose to accept it. And that we may the more readily be induced to choose the one thing needful, God sometimes takes away or allows to be taken away many of our other things. Health, property, friends, these and many other things are sometimes taken that our hearts may turn to the needful thing. May God grant us the wisdom to choose and the grace to choose the one needful thing, and quickly, for the opportunity to choose will soon be past.

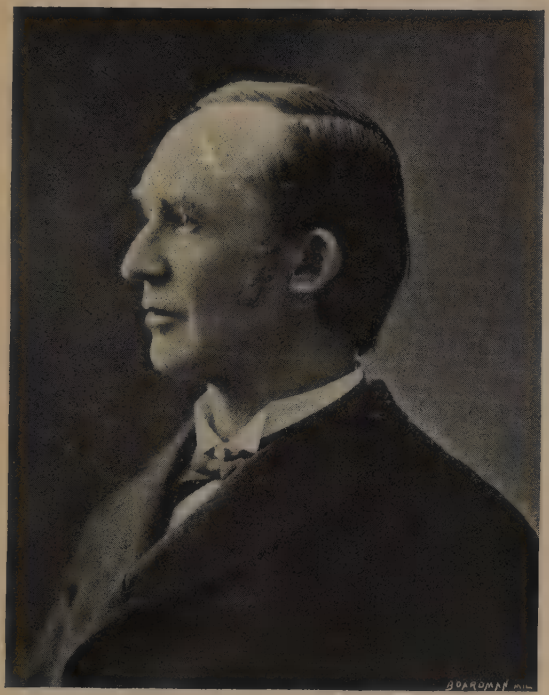
SUFFERING WITH CHRIST.

BY REV. JAMES HAMILTON,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, St. Joseph, Mich.

Text: "Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings that when his glory is revealed ye may be glad with exceeding joy." I Peter, 4:13.

God has implanted in the hearts of all men a desire to stand well with their fellows. There is no egotism so colossal, or callousness so impervious as not to be influenced by this sentiment. Even Guiteau and Prendergast desired to be thought patriotic. The wisdom of God in implanting this principle in mankind is manifest. It is a conservative, indeed I may say a *preservative* element in society. How many unwise things we would say and do but for the restraint of this principle. It makes us think twice before we speak or act. Next to the fear of God this fear of man restrains us. But may not this desire for the good opinion of our fellow-men become a snare and hindrance to the development of Christian character? Make us silent and subservient when we ought to speak out, or speak and applaud when we ought to be silent and frowning? It is this sentiment—I call



JAMES HAMILTON.

it fear—which holds many Christian men in their old political parties when they know these parties are selfish and corrupt, and utterly unfit to do the will of God in the government of this country. The offset to this *centrifugal* force of man's opinion and influence is the *centripetal* force of God's love and law. These two forces, acting and re-acting, were doubtless meant to keep man in his true orbit. Shame to him that he allows the near and the gross to deflect him from his true course!

Another fact is our sensitiveness to suffering and shrinking from physical pain. When speaking out or acting out our convictions exposes us to difficulty and danger, we hesitate, ah, we frequently falter and flunk! Not many Garrisons, Browns or Lovejoys in our day, nor many in any age who have the sterling stuff in them of the three Hebrew children who for their faith went deliberately into the fire. The world languishes for want of such. May God raise us up in this our time of need a race of moral heroes!

A third fact is the reluctance with which we expose ourselves to temporal loss or personal sacrifice for the sake of a good cause. The slaughter of the Armenians by the Turks, and starvation of the Cubans by the Spaniards are proofs of this statement. It is this same consideration that holds back many intelligent heathen from becoming Christians, as to do so

would lose them patrimony, patronage and place. So in Roman Catholic countries, to become Protestants would expose them to ostracism, boycott and persecution. Would you have an illustration nearer home? All I need to do is to point to the saloon and say, "Prohibition!" Here there is a trinity of influences holding men back from an utter abandonment of themselves to God. Conservatives venerate and blindly follow these principles, and call men fanatics who ignore them; but Jesus Christ challenged every one of them, and pronounced only those blessed who defied them and cast them to the winds in following him. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." Not only are we to be indifferent to the praise of men and to suffering and loss, but we are to "rejoice and be exceeding glad"—jump up and down with joy—when brought into contempt and suffering for his sake. If that is not making "gravitation turn the other way," I am no judge of human nature or experience. Just one reflection before I proceed with the discussion of my text. There has been no advance in science, art, civilization or religion that has not been in defiance of these conservative principles, so called. From the days of Abel to Ballington Booth, from Moses to Moody, from Socrates

to President Andrews, reformers have suffered persecution. Go back over the track of history and you can trace every forward movement of the race in blood. Our redemption was by blood! Our enfranchisement was by blood! Our reformation was by blood! Our emancipation was by blood! And I believe we will be purged from our present evil conditions by blood. The people who by their patronage and votes have fostered the saloon with all its attendant horrors and corruption, will yet pay the price in blood. When this "devil's school" has turned out a sufficient number of its graduates, in some conflict between labor and capital, which is sure to come, these debased villains—this spawn of the devil—debauched by the license system, will take advantage of the strife and strike to plunder and destroy. The regeneration will come when we have paid the price in blood. Sitting in the ashes of your homes you will yet say of this evil what Abraham Lincoln said of slavery: "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." Sub-

stitute *saloon* for *slavery* in this sublime passage and you have the "deadly parallel."

I. The strange thing about my text is not that men should be persecuted for righteousness' sake, but that they should be expected to "rejoice and be exceeding glad" in the midst of their sufferings,—"jump up and down with joy" when men were jumping on them, so to speak. Surely here is a mighty mystery! Let us then address ourselves to the task of solving it if possible. As Kepler discovered a discrepancy in the Copernican theory of the planetary movements, so we shall find fallacies in the popular views as to what constitutes "suffering with Christ and the glory which is to follow." As the astronomer chased down one hypothesis after another through twenty-two years of patient toil, until he at last discovered the true laws of planetary motion, so let us chase down these false theories of joy in suffering until we reach the true solution of our subject.

1. One thing is certain, there is no merit in *mere* suffering. The drunkard's headache, the glutton's gout, the sensualist's impotency, the felon's cell and the hangman's rope are all in proof of this statement. And yet there are people who put on long faces, and indulge in pious whining about the compensations of suffering in the future life, when they are simply being punished for their sins and sensual indulgences. "What glory is it if, when ye are buffeted for your

faults, ye take it patiently? But when ye do well and suffer for it ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God."

2. Nor is this reward and glory bestowed upon us when we suffer in consequence of maintaining our so-called rights. It is never found at the end of a law suit. Jesus says, "Resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also. And if any man sue thee at the law and take away thy coat let him have thy cloak also." Now, I do not mean to affirm that a Christian is necessarily in the wrong who engages in a law suit, but I do mean to say that he will never find the joy of my text in that way.

3. Nor is it *always* found through suffering in behalf of Christ's cause. Men might die for Christ, and yet be lost because indulging a wrong spirit. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." Who thinks now that the Crusaders who died by thousands to wrest Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the infidel Turks, had the spirit of Jesus? Who thinks to-day that Orangeism or the A. P. A. has the spirit of Christ? They have a zeal, but not according to knowledge. It savors too much of the spirit of Peter when he smote the High Priest's servant and cut off his ear. Such zeal, or suffering in consequence of it, will not secure for us the Jesus joy.

4. Another mistake hard to define, and indulged in too frequently by devout Christians, is that they are suffering for righteousness' sake when the fact is they are suffering in consequence of some eccentricity, infirmity or hobby of their own, which is offensive to people generally. They think the opposition they arouse is because of the truth, when it may be the larger part of it is awakened by their cranky and unfortunate way of putting things. Such people see things in a very strong light and have little patience with those who are slower to see, or duller of apprehension, not to speak of their impatience with those who are deliberately disloyal. There is no Jesus joy in suffering engendered in this way.

II. And now if this joy in suffering and reward in glory are not found in sufferings such as I have specified, what is the character of the suffering that has such a glorious reward? My answer is: It is suffering *with* Christ. Mark you, Christ did not suffer for his sins, nor for the maintenance of his rights, nor for his eccentricities, but he suffered vicariously; so we are to suffer with him for others. My text says we are partakers of Christ's sufferings. Paul says, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us so also our consolation aboundeth by Christ." (II Cor. 1:5.) In Col. 1:24 he says: "I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake which is the

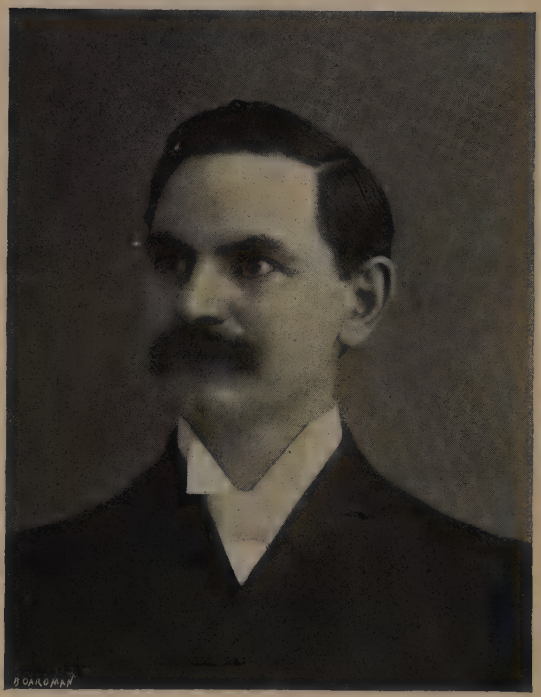
church." I Peter 5:1 declares, "I am a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." That word "witness," meaning martyr, explains why we know so little of the Jesus joy. We have so little of the martyr spirit. We shrink from ostracism, boycott and personal violence. Jesus, "for the joy that was set before him, *endured the cross, despising the shame*, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." To have the joy of my text, we must have the martyr spirit, that principle which led Paul to say, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them dung that I may win Christ. * * * That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." The cross just suited Paul. How does it suit you? Do you shrink from the fire, the lion's den, the sword, the stones, the wild beasts? If you do, you cannot be Jesus' disciples. You can never know the joy of which the Apostle speaks until you can say to the world what Chrysostom said to the empress Eudocia when she threatened to banish him from her kingdom. "Should the empress determine to banish me, let her banish me; 'the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.' If she will cast me into the sea, let her cast me into the sea, I will remember Jonah. If she will

throw me into a burning, fiery furnace, the three Hebrew children were there before me. If she will throw me to the wild beasts, I will remember that Daniel was in the den of lions. If she will condemn me to be stoned, I shall be the associate of Stephen the proto-martyr. If she will have me beheaded, the Baptist submitted to the same punishment. If she will take away my substance, 'naked came I out of my mother's womb ; naked shall I return thither : The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.'" She did banish him, but this did not abate his zeal ; he wrote a triumphant treatise to his friends to the effect that "none can hurt the man who will not hurt himself." Exasperated by his buoyant spirit the empress banished him to a more remote and desolate region on the shores of the Euxine sea on the very verge of the Roman empire. On his way thither, compelled to travel on foot, and bare-headed under a burning sun, he succumbed to his sufferings and died, blessing God with his dying lips. "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good ?" "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."

III. In conclusion note that the "exceeding joy" of my text is to be realized only when Christ's glory is revealed. That is, at the "end of the world" or "age"—"when the Son of man shall come into his

glory and all the holy angels with him." It would seem as though the Lord proposed to test our loyalty and heroism to the very last degree. In saying this, I do not mean to declare that there is no present joy and exultation of spirit in suffering with Christ, for so to affirm would contradict both Scripture and Christian experience. No one familiar with the martyr-spirit—which, thank God, has not quite died out of the church in any age—can question the great joy which now rewards suffering for righteousness' sake. How great that joy is known only by those whose hearts have been thrilled with divine rapture while they suffered with their Lord. What I mean to affirm is, that the "exceeding joy" of my text, as well as the rewards promised in the Scripture references I have quoted, all relate to the "second coming of Christ." It is only "when Christ who is our life shall appear" that we shall "appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:4.) It is "when the Chief Shepherd shall appear" that we shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Should this fact of joy postponed make us less loyal and faithful now? God forbid! No more than the promise to a child of a magnificent estate when he attains his majority should make him indifferent and unappreciative of his father's present care and love. With present joy and future glory how mighty the incentives to faithfulness! With "a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and

mothers, and children, and lands with *persecutions*, and in the '*world to come*' eternal life," we can well afford to "endure joyfully the spoiling of our goods," not counting our lives dear unto ourselves, if we may "win Christ and have part in the first resurrection." Thus, beloved, I have tried to set before you what it means to suffer with Christ, and the glory which is to follow. May we all be among the happy number who, when his glory is revealed, shall rejoice with exceeding joy!



A. E. CRAIG.

M. E. CHURCH, ALBION, MICH.

THE COMING ONE.

BY REV. A. E. CRAIG, PH. D.,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, Albion, Mich.

Text: "Art thou he that should come? Or look we for another?" Luke 7:20.

"Coming events cast their shadows before." The reflections and refractions of light purpling the eastern horizon presage unmistakably the full day soon to burst upon the earth. The sap circulating in root and stem is potent prophecy of the flower soon to unfold its beauty. So the strange movement of facts and forces previous to our Lord's advent declared unmistakably that the fullness of time had come.

"No war or battle sound was heard the world around;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;
The hooked chariot stood unstained with hostile blood,"

when upon the world's stillness broke the angel's song, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." In this period of expectancy stood forth that strange, unique, powerful figure, dressed in camel's hair, feeding upon locusts and wild honey, while, with uplifted voice, he made the desert

resound with the proclamation: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But John is now in prison awaiting his final doom so soon to fall from a tyrant's hand. Pent up as a caged eagle amid the damp and dank of filthy prison walls, it is not surprising that his natural weakness should rise as a film before his eye of faith, and dim his spiritual vision. We discern a tinge of doubt coloring John's question projected through his disciples to Christ: "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" But while John's question implies doubt, it also breathes strong faith—faith in the fact of the coming Messiah. Whether Jesus be the Christ or not, he may not know, but of this he is certain, some one should come; all indications point to that fact. Nothing is able to shake his faith in such a patent matter.

One of the strongest proofs of the divinity of Christ's mission is found in the fact that his coming met the general expectation of the world. His presence was an explanation of the strange phenomena of history, mysterious excepting as so viewed. Looking at the various lines of interest that seek their explanation in Christ we remark:

I. One ought to come to meet the general expectation of the Jewish people. "Give me in one sentence the proof that your religion is divine," demanded the skeptical Frederick the Great of his chaplain. "The Jews, your majesty," was the terse reply.

You ask me what is the standing miracle of all ages. I reply, *the Jewish people.* Dynasties have come and gone, cities have risen into grandeur and fallen into decay, thrones have reared their proud magnificence and crumbled into the dust of oblivion, nations have swollen into greatness and melted into insignificance; time and again the besom of destruction has swept the face of the ages, carrying down potentates, principalities and powers till enquiring minds have asked, Assyria, Greece, Carthage, Rome, where are they? only to receive answer, "time has dried these realms to deserts." All this tragedy of history has been enacted since the voice calling Abraham to the founding of a chosen people was heard, and yet, to this day stands the Jewish people, unique and marvelous in its inherent unity. Held together by the adhesive power of one great idea they withstood all the ravages of time and the hostilities of opposing hosts, never once losing heart, never once abandoning hope, always composed in their confident assurance of the future. From first to last in their history this confidence never failed them. It failed them not when on the distant banks of the Euphrates the willows held their silent harps and tears choked the songs of Zion. It failed not when the trampling hosts of Alexander swept over their country with all the ravages of war. It failed not even when their land was laid waste by Egypt and their temple desecrated by rapacious hands.

Broken, hated, ground to powder, counted as less than the dust of the balance, yet this people maintains its integrity. What mighty impact wrought such a marvel? Our reply is, the expectation of a coming deliverer. Interlaced with the fabric of their history was the golden thread of prophecy, sometimes dim, always visible, always potential. This prophecy, begun in vagueness and obscurity, shone brighter and brighter till it assumed all the evidences of certainty to their minds.

Let us trace rapidly this luminous thread. It begins with the dawn of human history. Wrapt about the curses and the sorrows of the fall was the binding promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." A covenant with Abraham was established; "I will make thee a great nation, I will bless thee and make thy name great." Of Judah was it said, "A lawgiver shall not pass from between thy feet till Shiloh come." Balaam, the semi-heathen prophet, accustomed to predictions in the heavens, sees the conquering star rise above the hosts of Israel encamped. Moses read in the infolding pillar of cloud and of fire the promise of an everlasting priesthood. As Israel's sweetest singer feels the breath of inspiration stir his soul into prophetic emotion, he tunes his melodious harp and bursts forth in a glorious succession of song. Now it swells in triumphant praise of the conquering King who sits enthroned till

his enemies are a stool for his feet. Again he rapturously celebrates the nuptials of the Messiah as he espouses the chosen nation as his bride. Or it may be in minor chord he sings the solemn lament of the Man of Sorrows whose head droops in weakness as he exclaims, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani. So, too, Israel's greatest prophet, Isaiah, wrapt in ecstatic fire, sees far into the future and spreads in such startling detail the events of future years that many have mistaken the prediction for history. So when Christ did come it is not hard to believe that gleams of this pure faith appeared, and many were stirred with profound anticipations. So the devout Simeon, who was waiting for the consolation of Israel, was not found staggering in unbelief when the infant Jesus was laid in his arms, and that aged prophetess, Anna, who came into the temple at that same instant, was prepared to accept the Messiah in his swaddling clothes, and to speak of him to others who looked for the redemption of Israel. We say it was this expectation of the Messiah—an expectation that sparkled in type, glowed in imagery, shouted in song and breathed in prophecy, a hope that lingered around their very altar and became imbedded in their very institution, that served as a unifying force among this people. Involved in all their history was the vital, coherent, energetic expectation of one who should come ; some one wiser than the wisest, greater than the greatest, diviner than the

divinest, a deliverer for the oppressed, a redeemer of the race, a savior of the lost, *ought* to come to fulfill the longing, anxious gaze of that chosen people. He came. Prophecy met its fulfillment, type gave place to anti-type, the world received its Redeemer. True, they were sadly disappointed. They looked for pomp and power, they found a man of sorrows. Yet his shameful rejection did not change the fact that all the rays of prophetic light shining throngh the volume of Hebrew literature focused in Christ, the Light of the world.

II. We further remark that one should come to meet the general expectation of the human race. We see, for instance, an expectation born of the strange providential movement of events that preceded the advent of our Lord. Alexander had swept over all Western Asia, leveling the diverse civilizations existent, and replacing the various Semitic languages, angular, unpliable and unphilosophic, with that most flexible and expressive of languages, the Greek, so that when the gospel should be proclaimed, a suitable medium was found for its dissemination to all the world. Again, we see the various agencies of dispersion had scattered the Jewish tribes among all nations. Scarcely a city could be found without its Hebrew colony and Hebrew synagogue. This formed an opportunity for the new gospel to receive a hearing everywhere. Upon the banks of the Tiber had been

set up a great power that flung its legions like a mystic fate over all the civilized world and bound it in one. Highways thrown up primarily to make easy the transportation of the armies of Rome, but providentially fitted for the passage of the more peaceful embassies of the gospel upon their missionary pursuits, ran like arteries throughout that vast empire. Such were some of the unconscious prophecies, some of the historic events of that most interesting period. But even more wonderful by far is the direct Messianic expectancy we see expressed in other than Jewish writers. The glowing headlight upon the engine not only throws its luminous blaze upon the tracks before it, but sends fugitive rays, as well, right and left into the thick darkness of the night. If we compare the prophecy as contained in the Scriptures to the light upon the tracks, we may conveniently represent the stray references found in Gentile sources to the side flashes. Confucius, the philosopher of the Chinese, hinted that it was from the west the true saint, the true wise man should come. In the luxuriant Vedic literature of India, frequent reference is made to the future incarnation of Vishnu ; when the world, relapsing into impiety, should be upon the brink of annihilation this deliverer would come, human both in form and aspect, seated on a white horse and by his irresistible might would destroy all iniquity and establish righteousness on the earth. In the writings of the

Persians there is frequent mention of a glorious hero-prophet Sosiosh, by whose ministry earth shall be restored to its pristine glory and the wrongs of man be redressed. We turn to the writings of the Greeks, those proud men of letters, and are struck with this significant remark from Plato, their boasted philosopher: "We must wait patiently till some one, either a god or some inspired man teach us our moral and religious duties and remove the darkness from our eyes." In a familiar and famous passage in Virgil's fourth eclogue he hails with song the birth of a child who is to restore the golden age. He sketches the time when the goat shall bring home a plenteous store of milk, the herds shall have no fear of the lions, the serpent and the poisonous herb shall be extinct, the ruddy grape shall hang on the vine, and the oak distil liquid honey. Longfellow in his graphic song of Hiawatha seems to accredit the North American Indian with traditional memories of such expectation. Gitche Manitou the mighty, the creator of the nations, looking down from the mountains upon the wrangling and dissension of the warrior tribes addresses them:

"Oh, my children! my poor children!
I will send a prophet to you,
A deliverer of the nations,
Who shall guide you, who shall teach you,
Who shall toil and suffer with you.
If you listen to his counsels,
You will multiply and prosper:
If his warnings pass unheeded,
You will fade away and perish!"

In view of all this, how naturally reads the simple narrative of the gospels, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him." Poor men! Doubtless they, as many more, had been long sweeping the heavens, praying at the gates of light, ready to catch the faintest gleam of truth that promises to guide them to a clearer and fuller light. The tender flower gently carried on its slender stem turns its face to be kissed by the last departing ray of the evening, but long ere the morning sun has risen, while yet but faint streaks purple the eastern sky, its face has turned, ready for the earliest glance of dawn. There is sympathy between the flower and the light. So, to the first intimation of the light of the Sun of Righteousness, the religious nature of man quivered and gravitated. What a truth we glean from all this unconscious prophecy! Humanity is not a lie. This heart-yearning, world-wide in its reach, is one of the greatest tributes to the claims of Christ. He came in response to their expectation, a remedy for their needs, a light to lighten their darkness, a joy to dispel their sadness, an inspiration to lift their night of gloom and despair, and to usher in a morning of new hopefulness and assurance.

III. In the third place we note, one ought to come to check the ebbing hope of humanity in the world's future. Living as we do to-day in the meridian brightness of Christian civilization, it is hard for us to realize the sad condition of the world at the time of Christ's coming. Evidently a crisis had come. Every other means had been tested and had failed. Ritualism is exalted at this day as a saving agency for society. Judaism proved the too contracted capacity of this system. It was well so far as it went, but it was only a preparation for something better. It was the thorny stock upon which the consummate flower of Christianity was to bloom, but it was not that flower. Philosophy is heralded as the effective avenue for the soul's march up the highway of progress to its ultimate deliverance. The dreamy Hindoo, reposing in a luxuriant clime, found time and disposition for the profoundest speculation, but the result is not inspiring. His voice from the wilderness is a cry of despair. He flies from existence as the sum of all miseries; the aim of his life is to make sure that it is the last of him. Nirvana is extinction. Science has been exalted as the star-eyed goddess divinely ordained to conduct despairing humanity to a larger hope. We turn to the Nile region and behold a civilization whose proud excellence was once the glory of the world, the relic of whose arts and sciences remain still the wonder of history. Here we find

greatness, but it is crystalized in cold marble. Her colossal tombs are her mightiest wonders. But in them progress is buried, the light of the future beams not from the face of her sphinx. The star of hope has long since set in the land of the Pharaohs. But I hear some one say that what society needs to purge its vice is more of art. Culture is their slogan. The love of the beautiful is needed to shame out of countenance the hideousness of sin. But alas! even this failed in the hour of necessity. If there had been salvation in culture, Greece would never have gone glimmering through the dream of things that were. Never again will art so profoundly influence another civilization. But culture not only did not save Greece, but it helped to plunge her into more loathsome depths. That altar "to the unknown God" in the very centre of her art, her wisdom, beauty and culture brands the civilization as a failure. You have seen flowers without perfume, cold sober tulips in china vases looking as though they, too, were porcelain. Athens stands in history as the tulip in the vase, coldly beautiful, lifelessly aesthetic, having no flavor of virtue or piety. Is there hope for society in law? If so, that gigantic power resting on the seven hills will be the hope of humanity. Never has centralized authority been more complete. Her legions are flung to every quarter of the earth. Many lands are held in the grip of her mystic authority. Indeed, by her

discipline she did produce a certain strength of character. Her law furnished a code for subsequent ages. Yet she could not save society from sinking into the foulest corruption. "Never were vices that spring from despair so rife, never was sensuality cultivated so methodically, never did poetry curdle so readily into satire, never was genius so soured by cynicism." If morality depended upon law this would have been the most glorious era in history. It was in fact the foulest. Must, then, the star of hope march out and leave the night to black despair? Will none rise up to deliver? Ah, wait!

"Where the silver Jordan runneth from the lake of Galilee
A narrow kingdom lies between the mountain and the sea.
From its hillsides, red with vineyards, the gentle Syrian wind
Bore the only voice that answered to the sobbing of mankind.

Let us hear what reply that voice has to make. "Jesus answering said unto them, go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard, how the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, to the poor the gospel is preached. Magnificent response! No despair in that answer. The attention of the world is challenged. Henceforth this humble Nazarene talks of "My Kingdom." Just think of it, a Galilean peasant who never but once, perhaps, lifted the horizon that girds his native village, who had never seen a map of the world, one day lays aside his tools, steps

upon the scene of action, lifts his hands in open gesture upon society and exclaims, "My Kingdom." This, too, he does right on the scene of so many dismal failures. Those very hills had once been scoured by Sennacherib in conquering triumph; they had echoed the groan of his disaster. They had glistened with the sheen of Pharaoh's host and had seen his retreat and confusion. They had shaken under the tramp of Xerxes' five millions and had in silence looked down on the retreat of the shattered remnant. Over them Alexander had swept. On their sides the cohorts of Caesar had camped. They were standing a witness to the futility of all these attempts. Surely now as a son of such a memorable scene stepped out in the wild purpose of his enthusiastic youth, you would almost expect those mountains to break their silence in rebuke of such audacity and to give forth the dust of their dead to cast humiliation upon the wild dreamer. But no! his words as spoken on those vine-clad hills, his life as lived among that secluded people, his dying groans as echoed from that Roman cross have filled the world with a new inspiration of hope that has done and is doing more than all the philosophy, science, culture, and law of the ancient world to renew humanity in its assurance of progress.

IV. We note, finally, that one ought to come to meet the manifest need of the human heart. Have you ever seen the clinging vine ruthlessly torn from

its embrace of the stalwart oak and lying trailing, supine, helpless upon the earth! Each tendril eagerly lifts its head, only to droop again big with disappointment. Vainly it clasps each twig and stock within its reach. Its effort is futile. It will never rise again till some generous hand lifts it from its prostration and gently entwines it around the sturdy protector. Such is man. Created in the image of God, endowed with divine faculties, with a capacity to love, worship and adore the invisible God, with aspirations for high and holy things, with irrepressible longings for the unseen and the eternal, he finds himself prostrate, helpless, unable unaided to rise to that dignity of attainment his better nature prompts. We need not here stop to discuss the occasion of this fall. Its reality none can deny. Made of angel form, to hold communion with heaven, stamped with the image of the invisible, we see that erect form debased, that image shattered. No more pathetic theme can enlist our sympathy than the ardent struggles of humanity up to the ideal of its hope and religious imagination. The natural instinct of the heart says, "Worship God, worship him in spirit and in truth." But where shall it find him? How shall it reach him? Look at the mournful attempts, at his endeavor to satisfy this instinct. Look at his altars polluted with a shameful prostitution of virtue, or reeking with the orgies of human sacrifice. Is it any wonder that the more

devout minds turn in disgust from such travesties of the heart's most sacred yearning and like Plato exclaim, "We must wait till some inspired man teach us our moral and religious duty." Even their philosophers, standing in the most advanced upland of spiritual illumination, were "as children crying in the night, as children crying for the light." In response to such cry of the human heart it was needful that one should come. This cry is not confined to the ages of the past and to philosophers among men, but is as unlimited as time and as broad as the human race. Wherever a human heart is found weary and sick, burdened for sin and guilty on account of transgression, be it in a Caesar's palace or the hut of the slave, be it philosopher or peasant, there one ought to come to bind the heart, to open the eyes and solve the mystery of human existence.

> "Life's mystery, deep, restless as the ocean,
> Hath surged and rolled for ages to and fro."

It finds its solution in the coming of him who gathers into himself all the needs of humanity and encompasses them with his grace.

CHRIST SATISFIES THE WORLD'S NEED.

BY REV. W. M. PUFFER, D. D.,

Presiding Elder of the Lansing District.

Text: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." John 6:68.

The words of the text were uttered just at the close of the second year of our Lord's earthly ministry, the year of popularity. It was one of the greatest days of the three years. The day before he had taught a great multitude upon the side of a mountain northeast of the sea of Galilee. As evening came on he had miraculously fed five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes. So impressed were the people that they desired to make him a king, hoping that he would overthrow the Roman authority and raise the nation to a position of grandeur. During the night Jesus had crossed the sea to Capernaum and entered the synagogue. Hearing where he was, the people thronged together, bringing their sick to be healed, desiring to listen to his teaching, hoping to make him king. They came from the cities on either side of the Jordan and from the

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surrounding villages; and the multitude upon the mountain, some crossing the sea in boats, some following around the shore, helped swell the great throng. Intense was the interest, high the enthusiasm, strong the hope. They hung upon his words as he spoke. They brought their friends for healing. In their national humiliation they looked to Jesus as the expected king. They looked for further miraculous supply of their needs as had been given the day before. It was a pivotal day in Christ's ministry. None of the things the people hoped for were done, but other things different and higher. Christ delivered the great discourse in which he presents himself as "the bread of life," the nourishment of the soul. The thoughts of the people were earthly. They did not rise to this high conception. One after another they went away. They were disappointed. His words were an offense to them and were not understood. The year of popularity is over. The year of opposition is begun. Finally, only the twelve apostles were left. Jesus turned to them and said, "Will ye also go away?" Peter acting then, as at other times, as the spokesman of the twelve replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," and also said, "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." In these words Jesus is recognized as divine, and because divine, the teacher of truth, the giver of everlasting life, the being and

the only being who satisfies the needs of the soul. There is, then, in our text this thought, Christ satisfies the world's deepest need.

To whom shall we go? Continually this cry is going up from burdened, suffering hearts. How great the needs of humanity and from how many causes they arise!

Poverty and unruled passions bring sorrow. A great majority all over the world are poor. Every night many children sob themselves to sleep crying with hunger. Many, weak from disease, must toil on in pain. Old men and women in their feebleness can have no rest and quiet. Many are lying sick without needed food, medicine or care. Many millions pass their lives in crushing poverty, deprived of culture of mind and soul, needing food, clothing and shelter. So it is all over the world. Yet this earth has resources to support in comfort a much greater population than now lives upon it; and the needed labor could be done in such time as would leave opportunity for the culture of the mind and soul. Many are the sorrows that come because people are ruled by their bodily passions. Disease and suffering, sometimes of the bitterest, come upon the wrongdoer and upon his victims. As sad are the results that come from the indulgence of the worst passions of the mind, —anger, malice, hate, cruelty, revenge, selfish ambition. Because of these, most wars have been fought;

murders have been committed; hearts have been broken; rights have been trampled upon; the natures of the wrongdoers have been ruined; and there has arisen from all over the earth the sad, hopeless cry of their victims, "To whom shall we go?"

Man is a religious being. He needs religious direction and help. Universal humanity has a sense of God. Man desires to worship, and to be at peace with God. But how distorted the ideas of God! Statesmen recognize the relation of religion to the welfare of a nation. Napoleon re-established the church in France. Confucius discusses the necessity of religious beliefs and observances that the State may prosper. Philosophers recognize the need of religion. Compte devised what was called the Positivist church. In the introduction to one of his latest books Herbert Spencer says he anticipates his plan in publishing, for he wants to be certain to state his ideas on Ethics before he dies. The soul needs knowledge of the mysteries of life. What of the future after this life? What of the relation of this life to the future? What must be done to be at peace with God? Great religions have grown up about the false and distorted conceptions of divinity which men have. They are afraid of God. Their own fears make him to be feared. These religions appeal to fear, not to love. The best of these religions are not in high degree ethical. Yearning for satisfaction, for religious need,

there rises from millions the cry, "To whom shall we go?" Some try to satisfy the demands of their nature by pleasure, science, art, money-making, but none of these things can satisfy a God-imaged, deathless soul.

There are so many needs in human life, from poverty, from subjection to ignoble passions, need of religious knowledge, of strength, of comfort. There is wrong in governments, in the moral standards of society. Yet these are all results from a deeper need. There are needs about, but they are all from need within. The fault is with human nature. That is in ruins. It is blind, not seeing the great realities, setting wrong estimates upon things, holding little things to be great. The direction of the affections is towards things that are gross and evil. The tastes are inclined to the low and base. The will is weak, unable to keep from doing things that are known to result in disaster. "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint." Human nature needs reconstruction, needs light on life that life may be understood aright, needs a new birth for the soul that the faculties may be given a right direction and new strength; needs continual sustaining power. Not in human nature, in the natural world, nor in any art or science is any thing found which meets this need. In the worst state of all are those who say, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, knowing

not that they are wretched, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Christ satisfies the world's need. By words people reveal themselves to each other. Christ is the eternal word. He reveals God's nature, God's plans. He manifested himself in the form of humanity that he might better declare the nature and will of God. Son of God by eternal generation, son of man because by assuming humanity he identifies himself with man. He came to reconcile God and man. The circumstances of Christ's life and his character show him to be divine. There was an interval of many years from the time the writing of the Old Testament was finished to the time Christ appeared on earth. In the Old Testament much was prophesied about the Christ that was to come. Among the things prophesied were these: His tribe should be Judah, his family David, the city of his birth Bethlehem, in his childhood he should be sent into Egypt, and from Egypt taken to Galilee. His state in life should be among the poor. It was foretold that he should make a public entry into the city of Jerusalem, and the animal he should ride upon was named. The manner and circumstances of his death were foretold, even to the minutest particulars, as that lots should be cast for his clothing, and the man who should care for his body should be rich. All these prophesies were fulfilled to the very letter. Only God could foreknow these

things. Only he or those he inspired could foretell them. The character of Jesus was unique in its perfection, superior to human nature. As men judge each other, they are carried into such enthusiastic admiration of virtues that faults are obscured and forgotten: or in abhorrence of some elements of character that are bad, they fail to see traits that are good. Common humanity deifies, or crucifies. Just judgment will give respect, because the balance of character is towards goodness, because God is enthroned in the soul, which is struggling towards him; or it will refuse respect, because the balance of character is towards evil, the soul not surrendered to God; yet, in the good—even in the best—there are imperfections; in the bad—even in the worst—there are good things. No man has always been good. No man is without imperfections. But all the world unites in the judgment of Pilate, "I find no fault in this man." Here stands a character different from humanity, perfect, superhuman. All great religious characters have not only deeply appreciated the sinfulness of sin, but have bitterly repented their own sins. But Jesus, the most holy character in history, he who most keenly felt the sinfulness of sin, did not repent. He made the most wonderful pretensions, such as would bring utter contempt or the charge of insanity upon any other, but no one ever thinks of him in that way. His character does not show a history of struggle and conquest.

He is always pure. It does not run to excess, but preserves its balance. "Men undertake to become spiritual and they become ascetic; or endeavoring to hold a liberal view of the comforts and pleasures of society, they are soon buried in the world and are slaves to its fashions; or holding a scrupulous watch to keep out every particular sin, they become legal and fall out of liberty; or charmed with the noble and heavenly liberty, they run to negligence and irresponsible living; so the earnest become violent, the fervent fanatical and censorious, the gentle waver, the firm turn bigots, the liberal grow lax, the benevolent ostentatious. Poor human nature can hold nothing steady." Christ was not so. His character preserved its balance. Christ's character satisfies the moral conceptions of humanity. The Maker of human nature manifested himself before human nature and satisfied the moral conceptions he gave. Only he could do it. Humanity declares him perfect. Jesus is divine, or human nature is a lie. It cannot be trusted when it unites upon moral conceptions. Also Jesus—he that humanity declares perfect—says that he is divine. He is divine, or this perfect character has lied upon a question of highest import to men. It is impossible to believe that Jesus was a mad enthusiast; and for one of life so holy and teaching so pure as were the life and teaching of Jesus, to accept honor and worship due to God, and to say he was divine, if he were only

a man, is contrary to human nature. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh.

The things he has done show him to be divine. He performed miracles. They are recorded in the book which reveals him. In performing miracles he did what might reasonably be expected. For millions of years God was making a world. It was all for man. The things God does on earth are for man. When man's interest demands a more rapid or different way of working than is usual, we may reasonably expect God to use such a way. Christ performed miracles for the benefit of man, particularly that he might obtain influence over man for man's good. The Christian church and the influence and results of Christian civilization exist; and the power and life in them displayed can be accounted for only upon the idea that Christ was divine. His teaching contained a conception of life that was new to the world: "Blessed are the pure in heart." Purity is essential to sight in order to see God. "Blessed are the peacemakers." Not only killing, but anger in the heart is thought of by God as murder. "Love your enemies." Be kind not only to those who can requite kindness, but "when thou makest a feast, invite the poor." "Suffer little children to come to me." "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Such teaching was utterly contrary to what was thought and practiced in the world. It was original with Christ. It had not

come from the thought of man. He who fulfills prophecy,—whose character is superhuman in its perfection,—who satisfies completely man's moral conceptions,—who performed miracles,—upon whom rest the Christian church and Christian civilization,—the teacher of a perfect plan of life which man could not devise,—this holy being who declared himself to be divine, is God manifest in the flesh. We hail him as our divine Lord. Because he is our divine Lord he has the words of eternal life.

He has a great historic connection with the human race. That history, begun in the depths of past eternity, has lasted to the present moment, and will continue forever. He made this earth upon which we live. He made the nature of man. "By him were all things created that are in the heaven and that are in the earth, visible and invisible." Most wonderful of his creations that we know now is man, who may think God's thoughts after him, who has emotions and sensibilities which may experience keenest delight when their direction is towards the noblest things, who is imaged after God, so that he is, at his best, in the structure of his nature, a revelation of God. Christ throughout the ages has been making God known to man. He was the "angel of the Lord." He appeared to Abraham at Mamre, to Jacob at Peniel, in the burning bush at Sinai to Moses, as the Shekinah over the tabernacle to the whole nation, and

in various ways for many centuries. These appearances all had reference to the appearing of Jesus in the flesh. They were to prepare for his coming and work. When the preparation of the ages was accomplished Christ came. The Word became incarnate. Christ lived in the conditions of human life to show by an object lesson how God desired man to live. He also revealed the nature of God. The prophecy of the ages that Christ should come is fulfilled; and God is shown to be a God of truth. God's own dearly beloved Son leaves the glory of heaven, becomes incarnate, lives a lowly life, is shamefully treated and put to death, because God desired to raise sinners to glory. Thus God is shown to be a God of love and mercy. God's laws are founded in his nature. He abhors sin and has strict laws against it, as Christ reveals; because God is so pure as "not to look upon sin with the least degree of allowance." Christ reveals God's plan of salvation for sinners. The problem was how God could be a just God and a savior of sinners. A way needs to be found by which it can be shown that God will not depart from righteousness, will hold to the law he has proclaimed and yet save the sinner. When Christ was crucified this was accomplished. He is the way of salvation. The necessities of God's righteous government are met. "God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins

that are past, through the forbearance of God, that he might be just and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus." The example of Christ's life was a perfect example. In his thoughts and actions he was not held down to earthliness as humanity so generally is. The great eternal truths, God, heaven, hell, the need of continuous help from above, the sinfulness of sin, the eternal importance of the passing days, were realities continually present in his mind, as real to him as the men or the trees he saw. God ruling,—an eternal future,—the need of sustaining grace,—all the meaning of that wonderful expression, "the joy of our Lord,"—the great opportunity of being a fellow-worker with God,—such was his conception of his own life. That conception dominated his thought and guided his action. He did the will of God. His daily life was an exhibition of the attributes of the character of God. He was just, true, loving, merciful, pure. Jesus has gone back to heaven ; but according to his promise, the Comforter has come. The Holy Spirit abides with those who accept Jesus as their master, their teacher, their example, and trust in him as their savior. Jesus at the right hand of the Father, a continual intercessor, pleads for those who come to God through him. He is the world's hope of salvation. Through him sinners may receive pardon. Christ's life comes into the life of the pardoned soul. The will is strengthened. The direction of the affections and

tastes which has been towards things that are earthly, is elevated towards things that are good and pure. The mind is illumined; it sees truth more clearly; it sees things it did not see. The soul has a new birth; the life is a new life; the whole conception of life is changed. "Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." Christ becomes the living bread of the soul. The life of the bread is imparted to the partaker of it. He who feeds upon Christ is like Christ, and grows more and more into his likeness. He views life as Christ did. His mind is alive, keenly realizing the great realities. He has power to do things he could not do, to endure burdens and sorrows. The mind is loosened from the power of earthliness. He has comfort in trouble and a sense of communion and peace with God. Instead of life without zest he is glad he is alive, and has a sense of satisfaction with life. He rejoices in God. "The joy of the Lord is his strength." Christ within him is an indwelling life, a hope of glory. How wonderful the change in God's thought of us, pardoned, adopted into the royal family of the universe, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ! The revelation to those about is changed. It is the plan of life and a delight to work for them. The heart goes out in love and sympathy to all men, even to enemies, as Christ's did. The deathless soul in our fellow-men is always thought of in our relations with them. Regarding daily work,

"The daily round, the common task
Will furnish all we ought to ask,
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

We also think of ourselves as fellow-helpers of the truth. We are taken up into the plan of God to have a part in doing work that shall eternally bless immortal souls. How blessed the effect of the life of such an one! Cruelty and selfishness are driven out of the heart and there comes in love. How blessed its influence in business relations, in the family—everywhere! Such life and power on earth might stop divorces,—make happy homes,—keep friendly feelings between employers and employed,—banish dishonesty,—destroy the liquor traffic, slavery, the social evil, and bless humanity in every relation in life. Pardon comes to the one who commits his life to Christ; and the spirit of God witnesses with his spirit that he is a child of God. Christ gives a new life, gives sustaining power, gives the bread of life, and after this world gives heaven. Christ meets the world's deepest need. He has the words of life.

There is much for our inspiration. It is a good time to live and work; and we are in a good place in this country, in this great state, in our church. How great our privileges,—to enjoy the blessings of religion in our own hearts and lives,— to teach grandest truths,—to inspire to noblest living,—to lead to harmony with God, to peace, to heaven,—to live in

heaven throughout the eternal ages, beholding the happiness of some whom we helped to reach that home of blessedness! All our blessings are from Christ, the only Savior of the world. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

JAMES I. BUELL.

THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

BY REV. JAMES I. BUELL, D. D.,

Pastor M. E. Church, Mason, Mich.

Text: "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Philippians 3:8.

These fitly chosen and profoundly discriminating words bear the clearest evidence of unrestrained Christian frankness. They are also the outbreathings of a soul intent upon a high pursuit, and determined to reach its object at whatever cost. A well-defined idea is in the mind of the great apostle, and he does not hesitate to give it utterance. He is languishing within the old prison walls in Rome. But all the cruelty that heartless tyranny could devise, and all the hatred that his most bitter enemies can show, have no power to daunt him, or to dissuade him from his high purpose of reaching the fullness of the knowledge of Christ. The words which flash from his pen have the true ring of that soul-freedom which cannot be bound by any human power, or cribbed up in any earthly dungeon. An ordeal had come; a pivotal

period had been reached—a period in which the supreme sentiment of his soul must have expression, and character must be tested even to its utmost strain. When such a point as that has been reached in any human life, and a genuine article has been produced, it is shown to be in God's reckoning a thing of priceless worth, and in all justly discriminating human minds a possession of greatest value.

Perhaps we may discover more fully how this thought is intensified in the mind of Paul if we will linger by his side for a little while where we may come into touch with the enthusiasm of his faith, or listen to the words of trust and hope as he repeats them to us. Here, in this consecrated presence, we may see something of the splendor and charm of the prize towards which he is stretching imploring hands. We must not forget that we are not in a palace home, nor amidst the splendors of the gorgeous ceremonial in the temple at Jerusalem. We are within the old prison walls at Rome, and Paul, still writhing and smarting under the relentless savagery of the tyrant Nero, is he who speaks, and we hear the clanking of his chains while he formulates the utterance. Listen! He is now enumerating the things which he willingly lays down and gladly surrenders, in order that he may attain unto the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." For a moment he contemplates the high distinctions that came to him as a Jew, and how they

might have been a gain to him, had he seen fit to cling to them and not to identify his eternal fortune with the despised and rejected Christ. They are distinctions such as no Gentile can boast, and but a few Jews, even of the highest nobility, would dare to claim. We look at the picture which he has drawn in Phil. 3:4-7 with the hand of a master, and we are astonished at the sight.

But everything is gone now—all is surrendered to Christ. "His earthly prospects are blasted; his high fame withered; his name covered with scorn, and his very life in peril from his countrymen."—Whedon. He has exchanged his high place of honor as a leader and champion of Phariseeism for the loathsome discomforts of a prison cell. He has sacrificed a life of wealth, ease and political preference, for a life of toil, suffering, trial, and a prospective martyrdom. Is there now any regretful look upon that classic countenance? Is there a single murmur of despair from those lips so ready of articulation? No! Quite the reverse of all this. Pointing to all that he has left behind, and with his flashing eyes still on the cross and a thought sent out to its coming triumphs, his exclamation is, "Those I counted loss for Christ." And then, rising to the dignity and grandeur of the choice he has made, he sends back to those who are dearest to him in the fellowship of the gospel—the disciples at Philippi—his estimate of what it is, and what it is

worth. His confession of faith is formulated in the text of the hour.

When he thus gets a view of the "knowledge of Christ," and expresses a determination to make such an immense sacrifice in order to its attainment, there must be no conclusion that he had but slight conception of what he was doing, or that he did not bring abundant qualifications to the choice. Says Punshon, "We are not to regard him in the light of an unthinking enthusiast, intensely beholding the splendors of some earthly possession and longing to call it all his own though such a consummation were wholly beyond his reach. If Paul is regarded in the light of one who only grasps after the wisdom of this world, we may think of him as going out from the studio of Gamaliel and lingering in the shades of the Athenaeum until thoughts of the most renowned poets, philosophers and sages come thronging to his mind, intoxicating the imagination with visions of the rarest culture and most exalted research." But Paul is not to be regarded in such a light at all. He had drunk deep at the fountains of the intellectual culture of his times. He bore the polish of Hebrew, Greek and Latin culture, and was the peer of the most profound scholars of his times. This, however, did not satisfy the cravings of the immortal spirit within him. He saw in the knowledge of Christ the dawning of more effulgent light than he had ever been able to gather from cultured

philosophy or empty ceremonial observance. Here opened before him a new and far more comprehensive field of thought. Here was a new world, a new experience and a new life. Here was an object worthy of the most complete sacrifice, and he was ready to pay the price of its attainment. All the high distinctions that were within his reach by virtue of the purity of lineal descent and hereditary honors, were of but little worth to him when he found himself within reach of the rising and spreading glory of the cross of Christ. When he looked into the system of religious truth as revealed in the gospel, and brought to the investigation that wise discernment of which he was so eminently a master, all other things faded away in the comparison. Here he saw the surpassing excellence of the "knowledge of Christ Jesus" the "Lord." We strive to follow him a little way that we, too, may discover some of the qualities of excellence in this unequaled religious system.

By the phrase, "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus," the apostle must be understood to mean the *supereminence of the Christian religion as a great system of revealed truth.* Probably the very first among these qualities is the fact that the gospel is the highest embodiment of truth. It would be easy to show that all the fundamental truths of the universe are focused here. The old philosophers had been struggling to find *the truth*, and the question, "What

is truth?" had been ringing out for ages. But there was no success in the searching. Such men as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and others before Christ, declared that the essence of truth could not be found. "It is too deep and too high to be reached by mortals." Paul had been a diligent searcher after truth in the schools of Tarsus and at the feet of Gamaliel at Jerusalem, but was not satisfied. When, however, he turned to the Great Teacher and heard words of divine wisdom and love, he found the light which he had sought. Christ had spoken, "I am the way, the truth and the life," and there was so much of divinity in the utterance that his longing soul caught a ray of hope. Here is the truth as it is in Jesus. Truth of a spiritual life: a revelation of the source of approach to God; the true soul-freedom; truth to guide correctly and safely through this world; truth to teach men how to live and how to die. Here is evidence of active divine intelligence put forth for the moral enlightenment of mankind. There is no lack of the sources of knowledge in the physical world, if man will take time to investigate. When he goes to nature he will find it all full of the divine thought. See it in the nice adaptations all about him in nature. Joseph Cook saw this, and enraptured with the view, he exclaims in his original and quaint style, "There is an eye and sight to match it. There is an ear and sound to match it!" See what wonders nature un-

folds to us. They are above us and all around us. In fancy I wander out amidst the planets in the solar system, and Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune seem sweeping past me on their silent and mysterious pathway around the sun. An erratic comet comes into the field of vision, dazzles in resplendent glory for a moment and then hastens off on its journey of a thousand years. The sun looks down upon me in his golden splendor and I turn wondering eyes towards him and cry out with the bewildered Ossian,

> "Whence are thy beams, O sun!
> Thou everlasting light?"

The pale moon comes forth to weave her halo of glory around the brow of night and send up to her the adoring refrain of Praed—

> "Queen of the night! the filmy shroud
> Of many a mild, transparent cloud
> Hides, yet adorns thee."

Instinctively I ask them all, "What are you in the almost hidden life which you shadow forth?" See what curious and multiple forms the microscope reveals in the life below us. Is it wonderful that the naturalist spends unwearied years in examining the wing of a fly or the leg of a spider under such an instrument as this? Ask Georges Cuvier as you hand him a tooth or a bone in some other form, what nice

adjustments he finds in zoological science to enable him with such absolute certainty to determine as to what species of extinct animals these belong. Ask Michael Faraday what he finds in "Physical Forces" so enrapturing and so absolutely full of interest as to absorb every intellectual power. Nature displays her wonders to us on every hand. They are above us, beneath us and all around us. Travel to the utmost verge of the physical universe, and above the whole you will see written in resplendent glory—"GOD."

Go to applied science and art and you will find that which has been a steady development from the beginning. As a significant incident note the fact that on May 27, 1844, that marvelous instrument, the electric telegraph, invented by Samuel F. B. Morse, flashed over the wires from Washington to Baltimore the message in scriptural interrogatory, "What hath God wrought?" More than a half century has passed away since then, but greater progress has been made within that time than had been known in the whole six thousand years of the world's history before. See what possibilities God has hidden away in human lives. An incident comes to an individual and it changes the whole course of his life. From incidents unforeseen by mortal man the world has as a result Sir William Herschel, James Watt, John Bunyan, Martin Luther, Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfield, U. S. Grant and thousands of others. If you go to

history you will find that which has been a steady development from the beginning, and the study of the history of nations is an absorbingly interesting study.

Man is at school in this world, and he has made great advancement as a learner. He has successfully learned in every material realm, and has brought forth myriad forms of the treasures which nature has in store for him, but he has not found in any of these relief for his moral wants or food for the soul. What he most needs is truth from God; truth in a revealed and tangible form; truth sealed and authenticated by divine wisdom; and truth that touches him in his moral being and moral relations—truth that incarnates a God. The gospel exactly meets all these wants, and therefore proves its excellence above all things else. While men were searching for light amidst the darkness of the shadows that were falling around them, the "teacher sent from God" came forth and proclaimed to the whole of the human race, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Before such truth all other truth fades into littleness.

The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is that it is a satisfactory answer to the great moral questions which come up and so disturb and vex us when we consider them in their relations to two worlds. They are multiform in their character and cover the widest

possible range. To formulate them would be an endless task, and then only a few cases could be covered. The variety of questions is only limited by the variety of human lives. We have the following as a specimen: Should I, in holding the moral power which I possess, exercise any care as I touch the lines of influence which extend from my life to every other life with which I come into contact? These questions are all satisfactorily answered in the gospel, and it is absolutely useless to take them anywhere else. Science, philosophy, nature, reason, history, experience, and the soul itself cannot give the answer. Take these principles into the realm of practical experience and you will find that their excellence comes out in the tone which they give to human character. It is conceded by the most enlightened judgment in this world that the best life developed here is that which has gotten its poise under the religion of Jesus Christ. Here we have a great system of revealed truth which inspires pure and holy thought. It is a fundamental ethical principle that all character is made up very largely from the thoughts which it cherishes. If a man cherishes vile thoughts he will be likely to build them into his life and will give to the world a product of badness. If he cherishes pure and elevating thought a product of goodness will come out in the character which he has consolidated here. When he goes to the gospel for thought he finds God, Christ, angels,

good men and women, heaven, immortality and eternal life. Here he finds that

> "The freed spirit of mankind
> Throws all its fetters off,"

and the soul forevermore basks in the eternal sunshine of purity and love.

Another quality of excellence in the "knowledge of Christ" is seen in its power to refine our moral sensibilities and perceptions. In the unrenewed man these qualities are generally gross and obtuse. When the soul is not alive to God it does not handle or even perceive the moral forces within its reach. This is not intended to be a denial of the fact that there are refinements which show special qualities in the individual. There are such refinements, but they must always be passed over to the account of natural endowment. Sometimes these are very striking. The genius in art discovers an excellency or detects a defect in a work of art which has been passed unnoticed by thousands of others. The sensitive ear of the natural musician detects the slightest discord among a thousand voices, or hears the notes of harmony which others have failed to recognize, and the world has come to know that there is music in such a soul. How splendidly did Paganini illustrate this when on one occasion he appeared before an Italian audience to give them one of his unique performances

on the violin. It had been whispered abroad that a charm was in the instrument which he bore, and that if the instrument were removed the skill of the great performer would be ended. He laid his violin down upon the rostrum for a moment before the entertainment was to begin, and left the room. In his absence a man from the audience hastened up to the rostrum and removed the familiar and highly prized instrument and put in its place an old rickety fiddle. When Paganini returned he at once discovered the attempted cheat, and knowing the sentiment that had gone abroad he seized the old fiddle, and holding it before the audience said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I will show you to-day that the music is in my soul and in my fingers, and not in the old fiddle that I hold before you." And drawing the bow across those strings he sent forth such strains as had never before greeted an Italian audience. The audience, it is said, then arose *en masse* and cried out, "Surely, the music is in the soul of Paganini!"

But it is the province of the religion of Jesus to develop those exquisite moral sensibilities and perceptions which are always characteristic of a soul in communion with God. Paul felt the force of this great truth when he said to the Corinthians, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given us of God. But the natural

man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Behold the zest which is thrown into our religious assemblies when the flush of feeling rises on the wings of song, and

> " Heaven comes down our souls to greet,
> And glory crowns the mercy seat."

The excellency of this knowledge is seen in its marvelous moral transformations in human lives in this world. There are no such transformations found elsewhere. But the sceptic denies this and invites us out amidst the physical forces around us to show us what nature can do. We see some results and in our astonishment cry out : What is the secret or extent of this mighty alchemy of nature ? Ruskin picks up a handful of slime from the streets, but see what he finds in it. He says, "The brick-dust is clay ; purified it is porcelain ; cleansed most perfectly it becomes white, then clear, then hard ; then it picks out of the sunbeam only the blue rays, and we call it a sapphire. Touched by a skilled chemistry, the sand becomes white earth, then clear and hard, catching and reflecting the blue, the green, the purple and the red rays, and we have an opal. The soot blackens the touch, but skill pushes it down and compacts it till it blazes in the light with all the quivering power and glory of

the sun—it is a diamond." But under the working of the mighty force of the gospel a more wonderful transformation than this takes place. See, there is a handful of human clay all covered with the filth and pollution of sin, and a human heart down in the very depths of moral wretchedness. Now the almightiness of divine grace has touched it and a transformed human life is the result, and a saint is produced on the earth. How excellent is this knowledge when it brings a human heart into accord with its Maker ; puts it into attune with nature's harmonies ; and makes it content with life's allotments ! Who can estimate the value of such a power ? Sin cramps the soul and turns all its nobler aspirations into a channel of despair and wretchedness, but grace lifts it into a highway of blessedness and hope. Did Charles Mackay have an inspired vision of the excellency of its effects on a human life when he wrote his immortal poem, "Cleon and I ?" Listen to its glad and happy strains :

Cleon hath a million acres,
Ne'er a one have I ;
Cleon dwelleth in a palace,
In a cottage I ;
Cleon hath a dozen fortunes,
Not a penny I ;
Yet the poorer of the twain is
Cleon and not I.

Cleon, true, possesses acres,
But the landscape I ;
Half the charm to me it yieldeth
Money cannot buy.

Cleon harbors sloth and dullness,
Fresh'ning vigor I;
He in velvet, I in fustian,
Richer man am I.

Cleon is a slave to grandeur,
Free as thought am I;
Cleon fees a score of doctors,
Need of none have I;
Wealth surrounded, care environed,
Cleon fears to die;
Death may come, he'll find me ready,
Happier man am I.

Cleon sees no charm in nature,
In a daisy I;
Cleon hears no anthem ringing
In the sea or sky;
Nature sings to me forever;
Earnest list'ner I;
State for state, with all attendants,
Who would change?—Not I.

Its crowning excellence is in the fact that it is a certain pointing to the final unfoldings of heaven; a more complete revelation of God and his work; and the renewal of saintly companionships in the world of glory and blessedness.

A SERMON FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY REV. R. W. VAN SCHOICK, D. D.,

Presiding Elder of the Niles District.

Text: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; he wakeneth morning by morning; he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." Isaiah 50:4.

George Gascoigne, an English poet of the sixteenth century, said: "A boy is better unborn than untaught." But to what kind of teaching did he refer? Few, comparatively, have the true idea of education—its chief object and end. Were a canvass to be made of the millions of young people in our schools and the question be presented to each one, "Why are you at school?" the answer would be something after this order: "That I may advance in life;" "That I may be honored for my intellectual attainments;" "That I may reach distinguished positions;" and so on to the end of the list. But this is the lowest conception of what it means to be educated. The ambition to get on in the world, to become rich, to reach high position, to be honored and applauded is unworthy of one who would seek the ideal culture. It

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is selfish and ignoble. The true education is that which prepares us to help this weary world—"to know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." If you ask me to name the best educated person in the community, I will name the one who is doing most to help this burdened, weary world.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great American philosopher, said: "Men are valued precisely as they exert onward or meliorating force. Incapacity of melioration is the only mortal distemper." The measure of one's education, therefore, is the measure of one's disposition and ability to "undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free." Go where we will on this earth, we meet everywhere broken-hearted, broken-lived men, women and children to whom existence is a burden, a weary, hopeless round of care, anxiety and sorrow. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." The multitude that Jesus saw like sheep without a shepherd represented the countless multitudes of earth's wretched men, women and children, comfortless, forsaken, despairing. Here in civilized America the conditions are bad enough, but how much worse in other lands, the dark places of the earth filled with habitations of cruelty! The horrors of Armenia and Cuba are not the only horrors. Think of the millions suffering from the blight of ignorance, disease, poverty, intemperance and the countless ills to which humanity is heir.

Even in the most favored communities what striking contrasts! The abode of poverty and misery within a stone's throw of the mansion of plenty and luxury; the quiet neighborhood adjoining the dreaded quarters where drunkenness and rioting make day and night hideous. Then there are the uncounted numbers whose hearts are weighted with nameless sorrows hidden from the world's gaze. Some shadow has fallen upon their lives, and rare indeed is it that they know what happiness is. "I returned," said Solomon, "and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of the oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter, wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive."

As the traveler in foreign lands sees the ruins of the castles, cathedrals, temples, and visits battle-fields where the dead have been sown in furrows, and beholds the armies of the living marching to the grave, so in our own land we see ruined homes, ruined men, multitudes of sad-hearted, weary people, wrecks of their former selves; and even from the children comes the cry of sorrow which Mrs. Browning has echoed in her immortal verse: "Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers?" What do these sad and weary ones need? What is to bring uplift and comfort to the burdened multitudes? You have anticipated the

answer : More than anything else to-day this world needs men and women who know how to help and when to help. This is my definition of a learned man : One who knows how and when to help. A great deal passes for education, for learning, which is the veriest travesty. Much of so-called learning is nothing but lumber, rubbish. All of us have known people who could speak any number of languages, who were conversant with the arts and sciences, familiar with all the great authors, and yet without capacity to help anybody. They never did a helpful thing unless by accident. A truly educated man sees the thing to be done, wants to do it, and knows how to do it. Let us dwell a moment on this thought of wanting to help people. It must be a passion, without which one might as well not undertake anything. Young people, pursuing your studies in school or out of school, if you have no real desire to help mankind, to make the world better, either get that desire or stop where you are ; step down and out. There are already enough selfish, self-absorbed people in the world. " The age of the quadruped is to go out, and the age of the brain and heart is to come in."

The laborer who has no heart in his work ; the merchant whose only aim is to make money, without giving his customers value received ; the lawyer who cares more for his fee than for his client ; the physician who is not almost heart-broken if he fails to save the

life of his patient ; the teacher who thinks more of his wages than of the immortal minds committed to his charge ; the preacher more anxious about his salary than the salvation of souls, would better be out of the world than in it. Dr. Conwell relates that when he visited the hospice of great St. Bernard in the Alps, he witnessed one morning a remarkable scene. A noble St. Bernard dog which had been out all night searching for travelers who might be lost and perishing in the mountains, returned with the most wretched woe-be-gone look he had ever seen in a dog's face. The other dogs gathered about him to welcome him with every demonstration of delight, but he hung his head as if in shame and slunk into a corner, seeking to hide himself. "He's in a dreadful pout this morning," said the keeper, "he did not find anybody." How many of us, seeking to rescue the perishing, are disappointed almost to heart-breaking if we fail to be of service to some one who is weary and nigh unto death ? It was this passion to help humanity that made Abraham Lincoln the emancipator of millions. It was this passion to rescue the perishing that sent Grace Darling out among the breakers to give life again to the drowning. It was this longing to comfort the wounded, sick and dying that pushed Florence Nightingale to the Crimean hospitals, and sent her as an angel of mercy to the men, who in gratitude for her ministry, kissed her shadow as she passed from ward

to ward. My young friends, if you have no care to help people, learn to care. In the name of humanity I beg you to get into your heart of hearts a passion to help others. Then, next to that, learn *how* to help. The French have a word, *savoirfaire*, which expresses what I want to say—the knowing how to do a thing. Several years ago I was sick nigh unto death with inflammatory rheumatism. My great church, great in numbers and liberality, provided watchers to care for me during those painful weeks and months. Bankers, merchants, teachers, mechanics and laborers were kind enough to volunteer to watch by my bedside. But there was only one man who knew how to nurse a rheumatic patient. His hands were large and calloused from much severe labor, but his touch was delicacy itself. He knew just how to handle me, to lift and turn me in bed. Nearly all the others were my murderers. Their fingers were all thumbs. They tortured and tormented me. They made me wish a thousand times I had never been born. But that one man knew just what and how to do. I could go to sleep while he was manipulating me. Everything he did was all right. I knew it was all right, and from that experience was born to me a new proverb: Blessed is the man who knoweth how to nurse the sick.

You have all read the story of the forty thieves in the Arabian Nights' Entertainment. You remember

that the thieves had a cave in a dense forest where untold treasures of gold and silver were concealed. One day when they came to the cave, Ali-Baba, the hero of the story, hidden in the thick branches of a tree near the cave, heard the captain repeat the words, "Open, Sesame," whereupon the door flew open and the thieves went in. When they came out he heard the words, "Shut, Sesame," and the door flew shut. After the robbers were gone Ali repeated the open, sesame, and carried away a great amount of money. When a few years later all the thieves were slain, Ali Baba came into possession of the cave and left an immense fortune to his family. This knowing how to help is the open, sesame, the magic word that is to bless and enrich humanity. Many want to help but know not how to help. They spoil everything they touch. Who has not heard of the man who had an intense desire to save souls, but was lacking in wisdom to go about it? Driving one day through a gloomy forest he saw a man ahead of him trudging along on foot. Thinking what a good opportunity this was to save the man he invited him to ride,—an invitation he was only too glad to accept. But no sooner had he taken his seat than the good man said: "Stranger, are you prepared to die?" With one leap the stranger went out of the carriage and into the woods as if all the fiends of perdition were after him. A tract distributor, zealously pushing his work on the

street car, gave a tract on the sin of dancing to a man who had lost both feet. With all charity it must be confessed there is too much bungling, haphazard work in this matter of trying to help people. "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Observe the emphasis to be put upon the words, *that I should know how.* That is the gist of the whole matter. Quoting Emerson once more, "Men are valued precisely as they exert onward or meliorating force," we discover that it is the doing of a right thing, and doing it rightly that measures our value to society. "A word fitly spoken, how good it is; it is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." You who have read Adam Bede remember what a crotchety piece of humanity his mother was, so hateful that all shunned her as men shun a dreaded plague. But Miss Dinah knew just how to manage her. Whenever she came into the room the old lady was transformed into the most amiable and delightful person, because Dinah knew how to exorcise the demon and bring in the angel. Know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. Young people, that is the learning that you are to seek. You should give more attention to this than to any other study. Tact, address, to know how to adapt yourselves to circumstances, to be made all things to all men if by all means you might save some, should be your principal ambition and

study. It is not what the young people learn in their graduate and post-graduate studies which makes them the most useful. Human nature is the best text book. Those who learn to be kind, polite, courteous, helpful; who learn to respect their associates, revere their superiors and to be especially deferential to the aged, these are the young people who are to be the coming Howards, and Wilberforces, and Lincolns, and Florence Nightingales, and Mary Livermores, and Frances Willards, and Clara Bartons.

Closely related to this knowing what and how to do, is the knowing how to speak a word in season. Need I say to my young friends that that season is now? I imagine I hear you saying that you will perform some noble service for humanity in the future; but I beg to say to you that unless you are taking lessons in helping people now, you will never know the luxury of noble achievement hereafter. When a lad Sir Philip Sydney, that bright, consummate flower of English chivalry, wrote to his brother, "If there are any good wars I shall go to them;" but even as a lad he was always on the right side, proving himself every inch a soldier, striving to right the wrongs of the world. No wonder when he received his death wound, dying in an agony of thirst, he passed the cup of water intended for himself to a dying soldier, saying, "Take it, my poor fellow, thy necessity is greater

than mine." Was there ever a more soldierly act than that ?

Quite near you, my young friend, is some one you can help, and it may be that now is your last opportunity to extend that help. Some time ago I read of a gentleman who, hurrying along the walk toward his home one bitterly cold night, was stopped by a lad who told him a pitiful story : "Mamma is cold and sick, and little brother and sister are hungry and cold ; we have nothing in the house to eat and there is no fire ; won't you please, sir, help us." It was too much trouble for the gentleman to unbutton his great warm overcoat, and while he was touched somewhat by the tale of suffering, he hurried on, saying, "Perhaps I'll look you up to-morrow." The next afternoon he read in the papers the account of a mother and three children found that morning frozen and starved to death in one of the miserable homes in the alley. "Brute that I am, why didn't I help those people last night ?" was his mental response to the accusing lines. Help in season, my young friends, if you help at all. Don't cover me with flowers after I am dead. Bring the flowers now. After my spirit leaves my body I shall be "where everlasting spring abides and never withering flowers." Help people when they need help. There is not one of you but can do something, and do it now. If you are not kind and helpful when young, you never will be when old. If you do not fill

a place at home you never can abroad. If you do not speak that word in season now to him that is weary, you never will speak it hereafter. Covet earnestly the *savoirfaire*, the open, sesame, the art of adapting yourself to the duties which daily confront you. Do you want to go to any good wars? Fight and conquer the selfishness of your own hearts, and be swift to help the struggling all around you. In your own sphere, circumscribed as you think it to be, is your opportunity for glory, honor and immortality. This is your golden age—more golden to you and for you than any the world has ever known, if you can truthfully say of yourself: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary."

Can you say that of yourself? Let me tell you how you can come to say it. It is the Lord God who gives the endowment that fits us to serve our day and generation. He it is who breathes into our lives his own life and fashions us after the likeness of him who "spake as never man spake," "who went about doing good," and who knocks at the door of your heart morning by morning, day by day, night by night. If you will hear his voice and open the door, he will come into your life and transform it into a life so unselfish, so helpful, so beautiful that you shall reflect his image, and through you, and those like you, "the

whole round world shall soon, in every way, be bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

THE REPROACHFUL OUTCRY.

BY REV. L. E. LENNOX,

Presiding Elder of the Big Rapids District.

Text: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; my refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living." Psalms 142:4–5.

David, the shepherd lad, has now become the battle-worn warrior. For ten years he has been a fugitive finding shelter in the caves or fastnesses of the land. The distinction David gained by the giant's death excited the envy of Saul. The old king could not bear to hear the daughters of Israel sing as they did, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

The commonest and meanest characteristic of human nature is envy. It destroys the happiness and curses the lives of thousands. It warps the judgment, quenches charity, embitters the spirit, destroys peace of mind—a monster, base, detestable. With such a spirit King Saul pursued David with merciless persecution, driving him from his home for ten years. He

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first escapes Saul's envious wrath by the aid of his wife, Michael, who lets him down from a window. He next takes refuge among his old enemies, the Philistines, and is received at court by Achish, king of Gath. Imperiled hero, he flees to the wild cave of Adullam, a rocky cavern near Bethlehem. Now he is in the forest of Hareth, now hidden in the cave of Engedi, near the coast of the Dead Sea, 3000 armed men in pursuit of him, led by King Saul. Finding no rest for his weary feet, and utterly fagged out, he sat down discouraged, desolate and cried, "No man cared for my soul." Suddenly thoughts of hope spring up, and he exclaims, "O Lord, thou art my refuge."

I. Consider the value of David's exile experiences. Strange to find the Lord's anointed a fugitive —a homeless wanderer, pursued by the anointed of the Lord. However, these valley and cave experiences, as well as the mountain-top visions and sunset glow of life, have their uses. Hard as these years of exile were to bear, they were most fruitful years in his apprenticeship for the kingdom. In them he found what Hugh Miller called his schools and school-masters.

The exile experience preserved him from the dangers to which his sudden elevation of power and popularity would have exposed him. He learned his weakness and need of divine help. He learned to

trust in God under all circumstances, and the value and necessity of religion.

He had the best opportunity to become acquainted with the people, their grievances, needs, dispositions and tendencies. He had practice in the art of governing. He gained experience in war. He obtained knowledge of the country and of its enemies. Many of the richest Psalms were born of this exile life. Many of his sweetest songs were wrought out by this long and hard experience, for the comfort and hope not only of his own people, but for God's children in all ages. In spite of his few lapses from faith and perfect truth, he grew in character and manhood, he became strong in faith and virtue, large-hearted, wise, noble, consecrated to God.

Hugh Miller, in his work, "The origin of Pearls," says, "When the river was low I used to wade into its fords in quest of its pearl mussels. I found occasion at this time to conclude that the Unio of our river fords secretes pearls much more frequently than the Unionidæ and Anadonta of our still pools and lakes, not from any specific peculiarity in the constitution of the creature, but from the effects of the habitat which it is its nature to choose. It receives in the fords and shallows of a rapid river many a rough blow from sticks and pebbles, carried down in times of flood, and occasionally from the feet of men and animals that cross the stream during droughts; and the blows in-

duce the morbid secretions, of which pearls are the result."

Would that hardships and suffering bore always in a creature of a greatly higher family similar results ; and that the hard buffets dealt him by fortune in the rough streams of life could be transmuted, by some blessed internal predisposition of its nature, into pearls of great price.

These valley and cave experiences are beneficial to all Christians. Job stood the test, and came out of the fire as pure gold. The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning ; richer in character and richer in material wealth.

Elijah, desolate, despondent, throws himself under the juniper tree in the wilderness, exclaiming, " It is enough, now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." But here God comes to Elijah, raises him, strengthens him and sends him on his way ; gives him some new work to do. He anoints Hazael, calls Elisha to be his successor, and ascends to heaven in his chariot of fire.

One day a bright light went out in your household. You were so lonely that a hundred people coming into the house did not break up the solitariness. You were almost killed with the domestic calamity. Many a time you could not sleep until two or three o'clock in the morning, and then your sleep was a troubled dream, in which was re-enacted all the

scene of sickness and parting and dissolution. Oh, what days and nights they were! You looked for sympathy, but no one came to offer comfort, and in your utter loneliness you exclaimed with David, "No man cared for my soul."

A millionaire in Georgia, a very liberal man in the highest sense of that word, was brought to poverty. He says: "I went into my room and fell down on my knees and prayed, 'Lord God, explain to me why my money has all been swept away. I did my duty, I thought. I have divided with the poor and given to the church, and now it is all gone. O Lord, explain it to me; I am in trouble about it.' I opened my Bible and my eyes fell instantly on this passage, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.' When I read this I clapped my hands and said gladly to God, 'I will have infinite life if I die a pauper.'" These exile experiences are always preparing us for better things, as David in his exile was in training for the throne of Israel.

II. But there are hundreds of people who will take the word that David used in the past tense and employ it in the present tense, and cry out: "No man *cares* for my soul!" You feel as you go out day by day in the tug and jostle in life that it is every man for himself, and as the saying goes, the devil take the hindmost. There have been times when you would

have drawn your check for a thousand dollars if some one would only help your soul out of its perplexities. There are questions about your higher destiny that ache and distract and agonize you at times. No help comes and unrelieved you exclaim, "No man *cares* for my soul!" I imagine the poor in their poverty, querying, "Why am I poor while others are rich?" "Why restricted to the bare necessities of life and the coarser raiment, while others live in luxury and wrap themselves in finery?" "Why should I toil late and early until tired and weary, while others live in ease and pleasure?" Perplexed at the deference paid to money kings and this bowing to the money god they exclaim, "I am of no account, I amount to nothing in this world"—"no man cares for my soul." Dismiss these thoughts, my good friend, "God hath chosen the poor, rich in faith to be heirs of eternal life." Jesus was a poor carpenter—Christianity is your best friend, Christian people the most generous and kind. If forsaken of man and poor "the Lord is thy refuge." Mr. Spurgeon speaks of an infidel lecturer, who at the close of his discourse invited any one in the audience to reply to what he had said, supposing that some zealous youth would come forward with the usual arguments in favor of Christianity, but to his surprise an aged woman with faded shawl and antiquated bonnet, carrying a market basket and a storm-worn umbrella, advanced to the platform and said: "I paid

three pence to-day to hear something better than Christianity and I have not heard it. Now, let me tell you what religion has done for me and then you tell me something better, or you have cheated me out of the three pence I paid to come in. I have been a widow for thirty years, and none of you can tell me what the troubles of a poor woman alone in the world are. I was left with ten children, but trusting in the Lord in the depths of poverty, he comforted and helped me to bring up my children so that they have grown up and turned out well. I was often sore pressed, but my prayers were heard by my Father in heaven and I was delivered. When I lay sick I thought I was dying and my heart was ready to break at leaving my poor fatherless boys and girls. There was nothing kept me up but the thought of Jesus and his faithful love to my soul. Now, tell me something better than that—better for a poor woman, or you have cheated me out of my three pence." The lecturer was at his wit's end and said the poor woman was so happy in her delusion that he would not like to undeceive her. "No," said she, "that won't do. Truth is truth and your laughter can't alter it. Jesus Christ has been all this to me. I've tried and proved him, and that is more than you have done." How sweet the divine presence and helps which God gives to all those who love him and keep his commandments! "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

III. The unsaved ofttimes make this reproachful outcry as they see the professing Christian covetous, greedy for gain, hard-fisted, unscrupulous in methods of money-getting, as worldly as an out-and-out worldling; they exclaim, "That man *cares* nothing for my soul." His aim is to make a dollar, indifferent how deep the pit my soul may sink into. Intent on the fashions of the day—more time is spent before the mirror than before the Lord in prayer. Eager for the latest fad in amusements and godless pleasures seen at the opera and club rooms, but not in the prayer meetings or enlisted in spiritual work. Proud instead of humble. Carrying so lightly the burdens of responsibility as God's messengers to lost men. Enduring nothing, denying themselves of nothing. Selfish, worldly, formal,—any wonder these lost ones look on and say, "I'm perishing, but no man *cares* for my soul." How it brings the blush of shame to the cheeks of Christian people when one contrasts this indifference on their part with what men will endure and hazard to acquire worldly fame, distinction, or achieve some victory in science or art!

In 1853 Cyrus W. Field formed the first company to lay the Atlantic cable with a capital of one and one-half millions. Then commenced the herculean task of telegraph line and road through 400 miles of Newfoundland wilderness, climbing mountains, bridging chasms, fording swamps and streams; a task de-

manding a genius that could have handled an immense army. Funds exhausted, he went to England and raised nearly $2,000,000. Laying the cable began again, but almost immediately it parted. Mr. Field, however, bent every energy toward its fulfillment. He thought, and dreamed, and talked "cable," until his wife in a burst of impatience said: "I wish that old cable was at the bottom of the sea." "I would to God it were," replied her husband.

Delayed by the war, another attempt was not made until 1864. A new company was formed, $3,000,000 subscribed. In an attempt to lay the coil, the cable parted and again the croakers croaked. Mr. Field ran the whole gauntlet of criticism, misrepresentation and calumny. Three millions more were subscribed, again the coil made ready and the Great Eastern steamed out, and in July, 1866, a shout of victory went up from her decks. Since then, nations have talked one with another as neighbors over the garden fence. Stupendous undertaking—magnificent triumph! Who will invest life and fame and fortune as Mr. Field did, enduring hardships in a better cause, achieving the triumph of bringing one lost one to Christ—a work in which Christ and angels are engaged?

IV. Finally consider those intensely interested. Heaven and earth and hell are after your immortal soul. Earth to cheat it. Hell to destroy it. Heaven

to redeem it. No one cares for your soul? Why, one signal of distress on your part would thrill this audience with holy excitement. In other words, my brother, if you miss heaven it will be your own fault. I could bring a hundred souls who would kneel beside you and not get up until your sins are pardoned and your sorrows assuaged. No one cares for your soul! Why, in all the ages there have been men whose entire business has been soul saving. In this work Munsen went down under the knives of the cannibals he came to save, and Robert McCheyne preached himself to death at thirty years of age, and John Bunyan was thrown into a dungeon at Bedfordshire, and Jehudi Ashman endured all the malarias of African jungles, and our own Bishop Taylor at 70 is planting mission stations among the savages of the dark continent, and there are hundreds and thousands of Christian men and women who are praying, toiling, preaching, living, dying to save souls. Why do we build and sustain our churches and expend millions yearly on missions? Simply to save men and lead the erring to Christ.

No one cares for your soul! Have you heard how Christ feels about it? The long distance he came, "emptying himself of all but love;" his landing place Bethlehem's manger, the stables occupied by unwashed brutes? In that place Christ started to save you. At great cost he purchased your ransom. "Not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but by his

precious blood." Who can tell how deep were the waters he waded ?

"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed thro'
Ere he found his sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert he heard it cry,
Sick and helpless and ready to die."

With weary form and bleeding feet and yearning heart, O sinful one, Christ seeks your soul to save it !

A father in good circumstances in one of the eastern states had a reckless son who disgraced himself and brought shame upon his family by his conduct. From home the prodigal went to California to become even more reckless. For years the father heard nothing from him. A chance offering, he sent this message to him : "Your father still loves you." The bearer sought him long in vain. At last he visited a brothel in his search, and there recognized the erring son. He called him out and at the hour of midnight delivered his message. The gambler's heart was touched. The thought of a father that loved him still and wanted to forgive him, broke the spell of Satan. He abandoned the game, his companions and his cups, to return to his father. The Heavenly Father sends a like message to every prodigal.

But oh, the greater patience of God, greater than of this earthly father, whose yearning for thee is only measured by his infinite love ! Care for him, seek him. He cares for thee as only thy Savior can.

JOHN W. H. CARLISLE.

THE GREAT GULF, OR THE TWO DESTINIES.

BY REV. J. W. H. CARLISLE, D. D.,

Pastor of the East Street M. E. Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Text: "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." Luke 16:26.

The text embraces a part of the remarkable parable of the rich man and Lazarus. And in it is presented one of the reasons why Abraham could not send Lazarus to the relief of the rich man according to his request. They were separated by a "great gulf." And the thought which first claims our attention in the study of this subject is involved in the question, "What is the nature of this 'great gulf' which separates Lazarus and the rich man?"

Passing by some controversial questions touching this parable as a whole, I now invite attention only to the consideration of those points upon which there is large unanimity of opinion among orthodox Christian teachers, viz.: that these two persons had died; that

they had passed into the spiritual world; that they were separated in that world; and that the one was in a state of happiness, the other in a "place of torment." And it is equally evident that the gulf interposed an impassable barrier between them. It is also plain that this gulf was no *natural* obstacle, no wide, fearful and bridgeless chasm in *space*; for Abraham and the rich man were able to talk with each other across it.

There is, however, an important spiritual truth lying back of the letter of the text. This conversation is represented as taking place in the spiritual world. "The rich man was in hell, and Abraham and Lazarus afar off." The gulf that lay between them, then, must be the one that separates the evil from the good, the true from the false, heaven from hell. And the lesson comes with tremendous emphasis, that the irrevocable condition of souls in that world, as respects happiness or misery, depends upon the kind of character formed in this life.

Our text is a standing refutation of all annihilation theories. It speaks of real life under the conscious awards of happiness or misery. It reveals a real world, not a boundless vacuum, not a pure abstraction, nor an eternal absorption, but a real, spiritual world, inhabited by real, spiritual beings, who maintain their individuality and personal identity, and who, therefore, live more or less remote from each

other, meeting and communicating with each other similarly as we do here. But we can conceive of a different order obtaining with respect to all moral agents in that world. There the distance between two persons will not be determined by the measurement of roods and miles. It will depend rather upon their moral character or state.

The law touching intellectual and moral affinities is sufficiently operative in our present imperfect state to be readily perceived by all. But in that world it will attain to complete and perfect enforcement. For instance, similar affections will attract, and dissimilar will repel, and the more powerful the attraction the closer the approximation ; the stronger the repulsion the wider they are driven asunder. Good always repels evil, and falsehood repels truth. This principle reigns in the spiritual world as does gravitation in the natural world. And it is in harmony with this well-known law touching the attractive and repellent forces of good and evil, that the good and the bad spirits are, and ever will be separated in the eternal world. Such is the contrariety and repugnance of their moral natures that they cannot be forced into proximity, much less into fraternal union. Heaven and hell are therefore the opposites of each other. And between them lies this impassable gulf of incompatible and irreconcilable elements, which no human or divine alchemist will ever transmute into harmony and peace.

It is plain, then, that this "great gulf fixed" between Lazarus and the rich man consisted in the contrariety of their moral conditions. And as passing from one of these states to the other would involve the necessity of a corresponding change in the affections and thoughts, as their union would require an entire change of moral character, they could not meet at all. They were separated, and that forever. Lazarus was forever at rest in the paradise of God. But the rich man had passed out of the probationary state where he had the opportunity of repenting and coming into a moral state like unto that of Lazarus; hence, his unchangeable destiny was with the lost.

This parable teaches the thrillingly solemn lesson that every day and every hour we live in this world, we are approaching a state of permanency in either good or evil. Our characters are being confirmed in sin or righteousness, according as we give ourselves to the love and practice of the one or the other. The law affecting our physical, mental and moral life unfolds a tremendous truth that every man should prayerfully consider. It is this: Unused powers always tend to weakness and decay. Let the arm be wholly inactive for a time and it will lose its power. Let the memory go unused, and it will suffer loss. Scientists tell us that the ostrich once had wings and could fly. But it failed to use them because it discovered that it could run with sufficient speed from

danger. The result has been that the legs of the ostrich have greatly strengthened, while the wings have greatly decreased in size, until at the present time they are practically useless. We are told that certain fishes which have been discovered, as in the Mammoth Cave, having no use for their eyes in the perpetual darkness, have lost them. Doubtless the "natural energies which kept the eyes properly nourished were withdrawn through disuse." And we have no reason to suppose that under any conceivable conditions those eyes can ever be made to see again. See where all this must logically end. This tendency is not a mere fancy ; it is practical and real. It is the path of law. It is in the constitution of things, and we must abide its logic whether we will or not.

Let us apply this law to a higher nature—to the moral life. We shall see that when a soul loves the good and true and looks habitually into the face of God, that soul's appetite for the wrong is permanently unsatisfied and decreases in power. The tendency that is unused decreases, and with time enough, under grace, it will be entirely obliterated. This does not ignore the necessary and instantaneous work of regeneration and sanctification. I am speaking of a law which includes and harmonizes with all divine bestowment in response to faith in Christ as a sanctifier and savior. The soul in its upward look, under grace, shall pursue its logical course until the last root of

bitterness shall be taken out of the soil of the heart, and he shall have a new life, with free will intact, but whose every thought and desire is God-ward and heavenward. And he sings his joyous experience,

> "A heart in every thought renewed,
> And full of love divine;
> Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
> A copy, Lord, of thine."

As life is prolonged the upward look becomes intenser, and the downward look becomes less and less intense, until at last the soul is perfected in the soul of God; every desire for sinful pleasure dies, and he can say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." This condition of soul is of possible attainment in this life. It was realized by Paul. It has been realized by tens of thousands since his time. He who abides on this blessed summit of experience will ultimately pass from this life washed in the blood of the Lamb, to receive an abundant entrance into the glory of the heavenly Father.

But your attention is directed to this law as it works in another direction. It is like a two-edged sword that cuts both ways. Let us look at the other edge. How about the tendency to moral disability, or permanency in evil doing? Men find so much evidence in practical experience regarding the tendency of sin that they hardly need be told the fearful truth, that habitual wrongdoing tends to the perma-

nency of evil character. The drinking man knows that every time he gets intoxicated his ability to become a sober man is lessened. The profane man knows that every time he utters an oath he becomes less able to abandon the wicked practice. And it is possible for a soul to love the wrong and deliberately pursue it until the moral perceptions decrease and lose their influence. A man may look down so steadily that he will after a while find it impossible to look up. He can accustom himself to a low range of thought, feeling and action, until he fails utterly to appreciate the good and the pure. All his moral tastes are distorted and vitiated, so that he finds no pleasure in anything that is pleasing to God. And when he reaches this point he is ready to throw the whole intensity of his nature into the gratification of his appetites and passions, until in the processes of sin, the law that increases the one side of his nature decreases the other side, and in the end the very root and branch of virtue is torn from the soul; and the whole field is left for the sowing and reaping of evil, and only evil. When one has thus cut loose from all sense of moral obligation and is tossed on the sea of godless passions, he already realizes much of hell; and as he passes into the spiritual world can only expect to go to "his own place," on the opposite side of the "gulf" from the paradise of God. And taking men as they are—as they live and die, we cannot avoid the

conclusion that one place is as necessary as the other. This was and is the "great gulf fixed" between heaven and hell. It separated Lazarus and the rich man so effectually as to forbid passage from one state to the other. It constituted an immovable, eternal barrier between them.

It is not so in this world. Persons of the most dissimilar characters may dwell side by side; they may hold, externally, intimate relations, and yet when viewed morally there may be a gulf between them. But in the spiritual world things only are near to each other which have moral and spiritual affinities; hence they are near in reality. So we think of that world to which we are all hastening as one of realities. It will be gloriously real to the saint, it will be terribly real to the sinner. The saint will know that he is saved, the sinner will know that he is lost. Every one "shall see as he is seen, and know as he is known." But in this world appearances often deceive. For instance, we find that things which are nearest in space may be the most remote in reality. The blossom that springs up by the side of the rock and sheds its beauty over it, though near with respect to space, is still at an immense distance from the rock in quality and form. For if we suppose the same essential elements to exist in the rock as in the flower, still a gulf of difference lies between them. Those elements in the rock must undergo the most wonderful transfor-

mations before it can be in the same place or become the same thing as the blossom. And also between the animal and the rock there is a still wider and deeper gulf. Thus we find it true of things in this world that proximity in the *real* sense can be measured only by similarity in quality and form. Yet such seems to be the perfection and beauty of the spiritual world that things or persons of dissimilar character cannot exist together in any sense whatever. It would be as great an infraction of the law of heaven to admit a sinner who had died in his sins within its sacred limits, as it would be a violation of the letter and spirit of the law of our land to incarcerate one of our purest and best citizens in a prison with the most wretched criminals. The purity, the love and the justice of God all forbid that there should be a union of good and bad characters in the future world.

When this subject is viewed in a manner corresponding with the sense of the text and with the best known principles of moral law and government, how little force and truth does that theory seem to possess which holds that God will at the last, from his own immediate mercy, pardon all sinners and receive all men, regardless of moral character, into his immediate presence; and give them all equal access to heaven's blessings without reference to the deeds done in the body! Would not this ignore the divine justice entirely? Would it not involve the surrender

of the *one* principle most needed by our Lord while seated on his judgment throne? Could we respect the decisions of any one, human or divine, who, while acting in the capacity of a judge, should ignore justice? What protection could society have in any world without the reign of justice? Suppose the people of this State, having made laws for the punishment of thieves and murderers, should, when such criminals are arraigned at the bar of justice, arise and declare that the penalty should not be inflicted, that justice should not have its course, and thus allow the guilty to go free. Would the criminals be reformed by such a course? Would it insure the safety and peace of society? Would such an act of so-called mercy be such in fact? It would rather forfeit the security, the life and property of the innocent. It would make this world a paradise for anarchists and all haters of law human and divine.

Laws are made to protect the right and prevent the wrong, to shield the innocent against the wicked. Hence the great Burke said, "Law is beneficence acting by rule." But law is neither beneficent nor merciful unless it is enforced. Indeed, law is nothing abstractly considered. We have statutory law regarding the regulation of the traffic in intoxicating liquors, and the observance of the Sabbath, which in many places is a dead letter because it is not enforced. Thus we affirm that law is nothing, it is dead

to all intents and purposes, except when it is considered in relation to its object and is enforced to secure the end for which it was enacted. But God's law never fails of enforcement. We find evidence of this in the natural world. We violate what we call natural law, and it will not vary a hair's breadth in the exaction of penalty. And we have no reason to think that God will be less exacting in the government of the moral world. We sin, and the only escape from the full force of the penalty is through the atonement of Christ. We must be pardoned and cleansed from sin, or forfeit heaven. God cannot save us *with* our sins nor *in* our sins. Look at this point a moment. Suppose that in that great day in which men are to be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and in which the Judge shall say to the righteous, "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" and to the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" suppose that the Judge should set aside justice and exercise mercy only, and thus refuse to separate the wicked from the righteous, and should say to all, "Come,"—should say to the profane man, to the licentious man, to the rumseller, the drunkard, the gambler, the thief, the robber, the murderer; should invite all these saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father;" would these wicked persons be fit

companions for the blood-washed throng? Fit companions for angels? Proper subjects to be "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ?" Would not such an abrogation of justice carry terror to the heart of every loyal subject in the kingdom of God? Would it not make heaven impossible?

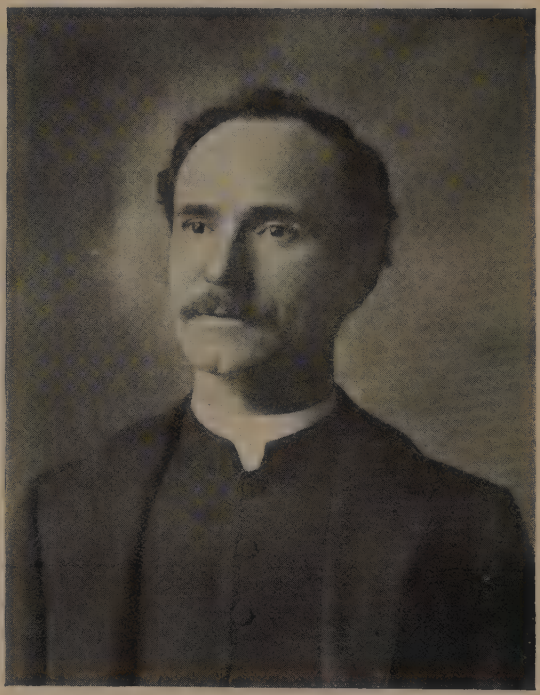
But some may inquire, "Will not the wicked be changed in the moment of death, and be made pure and meet for heaven?" We answer that there is not the slightest intimation in the word of God that the mere change of place or transition from this to the spiritual world changes in the least the moral nature of men. The prophet says, "As the tree falleth, so it shall be." And God says of him who meets death in sin, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is unholy, let him be unholy still." The man who dies with a bad, unregenerate heart, "will, like the poisonous flower, carry his own fetor with him; like the blind man his own darkness." And if it were possible for him to enter heaven, he could not see its beauties nor hear its harmonies. He would carry his own pollution, his own hell with him. The mere change of place through death from this to the spiritual world, without a change of heart, has no more effect to change our moral nature from evil to good "than taking a rock from the field and placing it in a garden would have in transforming the boulder into a

rose." There is absolutely no ground for the presumption that physical death is a regenerating or cleansing process. And yet many seem to base their only hope of future happiness upon the delusion that the Lord will at the last moment by some special dispensation condone their sins and admit them to heaven.

The Bible does not teach a universal salvation, but it does teach a universal atonement. Jesus Christ "tasted death for every man," and the only salvation promised is through faith in the atoning Savior. He will not save men *in* their sins, but *from* their sins. He says to all men, "Ye must be born again." He taught that "the kingdom of heaven is within you." Hence we can only hope to secure a preparation for and finally be admitted into heaven by opening our minds and hearts to the reception of the doctrines of the Cross, and by the organization of heavenly affections in our souls. If we refuse to do this we shall die in our sins, with the awful sentence resounding in our souls, "banished from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." It is the privilege, thank God, of every soul on this side of the grave to whom the gospel invitation is given, to escape the doom of final alienation from God and heaven. While there is "a great gulf fixed," an irrevocable moral distance established between the good and bad in eternity, yet it is not so in this world. There is,

indeed, a great moral distance between the sinner and heaven, but the gulf has been spanned, bridged over by our Lord Jesus Christ, who took upon him our nature, and suffered, wept, bled and died on the cross; who was entombed, rose from the dead and ascended to his re-enthronement with the Father, where "he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Thus he has opened a way, a highway, that reaches entirely across the "gulf" that intervenes between earth and heaven. And if we will walk in this way cast up for the redeemed, always "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith," he will keep that which we have "committed unto him against that day." He will bear us across the fearful gulf, and bring us into the paradise of God.

Unsaved friends, we urge you to plant your feet now upon this highway of the Lord. If you delay until you enter eternity it will be too late! too late! What this "great gulf" was to the rich man it will then be to you, an impassable, eternal barrier, forever shutting you from Christ and God and the glories of heaven.



WILLIAM DENMAN.

THE POSSIBLE LIFE.

BY REV. WILLIAM DENMAN, D. D.,

Pastor of the First M. E. Church, Battle Creek, Mich.

Text: "Keep my commandments and live." Proverbs 7:2.

A life free from the taint of vicious practices; free from the trembling heart, the clouded brain, the fevered blood of any unholy passion; a life in which impurity never has the chance to report itself in disease; a life that knows no guilty intrigue, that brings to another no foul wrong, that mounts no blush of shame to the cheek of wife or sister, a sweet, pure, healthy—in one word, a *virtuous* life; this is the first description of *the possible life.* This is the life of which, for the most part, in the interests of the young, for the sanctification and perfecting of our physical nature, for the honor of society and for the good pleasure of God, the wise man speaks in our text, as also in the chapter from which it is taken and in three preceding chapters.

2. Again, a life from which, by the merciful provision of the gospel, has been removed the guilt of past transgression; a life into which, by the regenerat-

ing power of the Divine Spirit has come a change, as when the soft spring sun shedding his balmy influences renews the face of nature, clothing the hills with verdure, causing the trees that had known the barrenness of winter to burst out into foliage, alluring forth the modest flowers that had hid their faces, and causing the soul in glad consciousness of the pulsations of a new being to sing, "Lo, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear in the earth and the time of the singing of birds is come." A life which has new aspirations and new powers of usefulness, yielding its fruits of service to the heavenly Father as the fields and the orchards to the husbandman; a life fed by sweet, satisfying communion with God, by reading his word and by fellowship with the two or three or the larger number meeting in the name of the Lord Jesus according to his divine ordinance; a life whose secret joy in the possession of Christ and his promises is a continual feast to the soul; whose hopes, like a perennial spring, keep the heart in perpetual freshness and youth, though the hair may be gray, the eyes dim and the step feeble; a life sweetened, purified and strengthened by its trials, exuding like the crushed flower its most delightful odors, losing only as gold tried in the fire, its dross, taking only the firmer hold as the forest trees pelted by the storm; a life that evinces itself in kindness, humbleness of mind, forbearance and forgiveness

towards others, remembering with penitence its own sinfulness and with humility its own weakness; a life that cultivates the charity or love that "suffereth long and is kind, that envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things"; that life which is constantly adding one godlike characteristic to another, "to faith virtue, and to virtue brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity," and is thus "neither barren nor unfruitful"; that life which from contact with the great Sun of Righteousness glows upon the pathway of others and shines "more and more unto the perfect day"; such is a human life into which the Divine has come—what the Scriptures call a *spiritual life*—and this is the second description of the possible life.

3. But again, this life of which we have spoken extends itself in a heightened consciousness of being beyond the grave, beyond time and the judgment. Death, that may slowly put out the flame of natural life as a candle flickering in the socket, or suddenly as a light extinguished by the wind, cannot touch this. The judgment will try this life, its depth and reality, as the mariner sounds the depth of the ocean, but the judgment will not end it. Revelation has set the door of the future a little ajar and has given us a

peep, though we looked through a glass darkly at that wonderful life of the holy. *What is it?* A life of perfected, glorified nature in which the body shall never be a clog upon the soul, yea, though the soul may have its present faculties quickened or intensified a thousand times, and though many more powers be added to those already possessed, yet shall it find in the glorified body a perfect medium for the execution of its highest possibilities. Here the soul in its imagination has often the rapidity of lightning, while the body in execution has the slowness of the snail. Here the soul seems capable of recalling every scene ever witnessed, every word every heard, every delight ever experienced, but beyond a limited extent differing much in different individuals, and in the same individuals, under varying physical conditions and excitants, the brain fails. Here the soul looks far beyond the range of its physical vision to behold the mysteries of space, but in vain till it calls in the artificial aid of the telescope. Here the soul would continue its necessary work, persevere in its investigations, follow its delights without being compelled ever and anon to pause, but the tired body and weary brain every few hours cry halt and threaten total breakdown if their requirements are unheeded. What may be the disparity between the powers of the soul and body, or whether there will be any disparity at all, whether the glorified move like the angel in

Daniel with a speed that annihilates space, whether they have an eye that can dart its vision beyond the range of the most powerful telescope, is not for me to say ; but we do know this, they are beyond weariness even amid the intensest activity, and the most exalted power of the soul shall know no sort of inconvenience or impediment from connection with a body in any wise imperfectly adapted to it. All this and more is in the declaration of St. John, an expression which all may use who are on the way to the experience of that life, "We shall be like him."

But there are homelier thoughts connected with the life of the good beyond the grave and the judgment. That life knows nought of pain and sickness. How much these bodies are called to suffer here! And there are sufferings of the mind besides, more exquisite than those of the body. Pain may mar the features and distort the limbs, but there *are* sorrows that destroy consciousness and unhinge the brain. In this life we call our hospitals and asylums a blessing ; in the other they would be a curse. Here, of necessity, the science of medicine must be studied ; there it must of necessity be laid aside, for the inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick ;" and as there is no disease, so there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. It belongs also to this life that no one who enters upon it will ever be

called to solve the problems of existence; how long will work last; how an honest living can be secured for the family; how debt can be avoided; how a little can be spared for the poor, for those who can not with all their efforts, from sickness and misfortune, get to eat what will keep them from hunger, or to wear what will protect them from cold. Honest, industrious people can not suffer loss from being thrown out of employment; the labor problem is forever settled; toiling for little in summer heat and winter cold is not known, for the heirs of God have entered upon their inheritance, and Canaan, flowing with milk and honey, knew nought of the abundance and richness of their supplies. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them to living fountains of water. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more," neither for the mind's gratification nor the soul's food, any more than the body's, "neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat."

It belongs to this life that it shall be lived amid the pleasantest surroundings. The home of the glorified is fitted up by Jesus who created all worlds, whose taste, power, and resources are therefore infinite. All these he will display in fitting up and adapting the abiding place of the saints. His assurance is, "I go to prepare a place for you." It belongs to this life also that it shall have the best associations. The purest, the wisest, the noblest people of all ages and

countries are there. One of the difficult things of this world is to find suitable companionship, elevating and pleasant society, but though that bright world shall have in it those who come from the north and the south, from the east and from the west, they will not be strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, members of the Father's house, who shall mingle freely in blessed and friendly intercourse. In its society and contributing to its edification, happiness and delight are Abraham the friend of God, and Enoch who walked with God, together with the sweet singer of Israel, Elijah, Isaiah, Paul, Peter, John, the martyrs and confessors, and thousands of others with a blessed record in history, as well as millions who in this world have never had so much as a corner of a newspaper or even a line devoted to them. Many who have gone up from our own homes will be there, *but best of all,* the Lord God and the Lamb, whose visible presence is the light that beams upon every inhabitant, filling them with a joy unutterable and full of glory.

It belongs to that life that its rewards are proportioned to service; advantages and opportunities at the same time being taken into account. "One star differeth from another star in glory," as one character differed from another on earth. It belongs to that life that its purity shall never be sullied even by a taint or suggestion of sin—sin that is at the bottom of

all unhappiness and woe in this life. The clean and the unclean are not together there as the beasts in Noah's ark. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean or he that maketh abomination and a lie."

It belongs to this life that whatever it is in itself, in its surroundings, its enjoyments, its employments, associations and rewards, it will never end or diminish. The life of Jesus will eternally perpetuate the life of his people, for the same words are used of their duration as of his. In Rev. 11:15 the triumphant reign of Christ is thus set forth, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever"—literally, unto the ages of the ages. And in Rev. 22:5, where it is said no night of sorrow, trial or death shall ever come to the saved, the same words—(for ever and ever, or unto the ages of the ages) describe the perpetuity of their existence as that of Christ. "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign for ever and ever" (to the ages of the ages). *This is the heavenly life* and the last description of the possible life.

All these lives are but the one Christian life in its different manifestations. We speak of it as the *possible* life, since, though its attainment is practicable and within the reach of all, it is by no means certain

that all *will* attain it. As free agents, the Bible shows that all *may* attain that life, but it nowhere says that all *must* or *shall* attain it. Indeed, unless God be proved a liar, and prophets, apostles and evangelists, perjurers, there is but one way of attaining it, i. e., by keeping the commandments. As to Naaman, the Syrian, was offered but one condition for the cure of leprosy—dipping seven times in Jordan—so there is but one condition of attaining the true spiritual life on earth and of perpetuating it in heaven. The wise man, in the text, speaking for God says, "Keep my commandments and live," and said Jesus Christ of the Father's commandment, "I know that his commandment is life everlasting," and again, "If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments." Not the commandments as found in the Decalogue or the Old Testament merely, but as they are expanded and interpreted in the New, where the prohibition against murder includes hatred without cause, and the prohibition against adultery includes also the lustful look. God's commandments are exceeding broad—as broad as the whole Bible, which says to all aspirants for true life what the mother of Jesus said to the servants at the Cana marriage feast, "Whatsoever he saith to you, do it." God's commandments are the gate and the road to life, and are sometimes called laws because specially chosen or marked out by him for the guidance and restriction of

his creatures, and because they are obligatory upon all and cannot be kept without reward nor violated without punishment. God's commands are also termed precepts, since they explain, illustrate or emphasize such duties as already exist. "Keep my commandments and live." By this we understand two things. (1.) Keep them as the guide of your life, as a map to guide your journey in a strange country where there are dangerous ways and pitfalls, or as a chart and compass by which to steer your course over the wide ocean so as to avoid the rocks, shoals and quicksands which might otherwise wreck your bark. (2.) By keeping the commandments we understand also that we must use them as a means to an end, the attainment of the spiritual and heavenly life. The traveller traces his way on the map that he may reach his home at the end of his journey, and the mariner steers by the chart and compass that he may reach the port at the end of the voyage. The secret of keeping God's commands is in the determination to do so. God will make it possible for you to do all he requires. You can believe what God says; you can do as God says. Never look upon his commandments as grievous burdens and galling restrictions, since God's love has designed them to bring you into the blessed enjoyment of spiritual life here and eternal life hereafter. God's commands are grievous only to the blind, disobedient and wicked heart. As love in-

creases in the soul, the yoke of the commandments becomes easy and the burden light.

For commandment we may substitute love ; love of three kinds, love to God, love to self, and love to our neighbor. These embrace all the commandments and set forth the whole duty of man, for "love is the fulfilling of the law." The exhortation is not, *try* to keep the commandments and live, but keep them. Some are always ready to excuse themselves because, as they say, they have tried and failed, but by the help of divine grace the right kind of trying is always synonymous, sooner or later, with success.

My dear friends, you have again, so far at least as the text is concerned, had the way of life put plainly and simply before you. Would you live the virtuous life ? Keep the commandments. To the young comes the command, "Flee youthful lusts," and to all, "Keep thyself pure." It will help us to do this if we remember the body is not a mere system of flesh and bones, of blood, sinews and nerves, but a divine temple consecrated by God to his own use,—a temple which he asks us to sanctify by preserving it free from all impurities. You would not enter a church building consecrated to God's service and break the windows, destroy its furniture and tear its precious Bible, but know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost ? Would you then desecrate these consecrated bodies when you would

shrink from profaning a mere building? Especially would you not do so wicked and unholy a thing when the divine word declares, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are?" The giving up of purity and the misery and punishment which must follow is death, but we entreat you rather keep the commandments and live.

Would you live the spiritual life which also includes the virtuous, then keep the commandments, such as the following: First, "Repent and be converted." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And then as the next step, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service," not forgetting "to perfect holiness in the fear of God." To refuse to do this is to abide in guilt, exposed to the wrath and judgment of God, but we beseech you, "Keep the commandments and live." Would you live the heavenly life which we spoke of as the eternal perpetuation of the spiritual life begun on earth? Then keep the commandments. "Run with patience the race set before you, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." "By patient continuance in well-doing" seek ye for glory, honor and immortality, and God will render unto you eternal life. Not to do so is to despise the riches, the goodness, the forbearance and long-suffering of God whereby he seeks

to lead you to repentance, to keep you from treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath and to save your soul from hell, where "the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, the murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." What may be the terrible significance of these figures is not for me to say ; I beseech you, try not their reality, but keep the commandments. Keep them as the virtuous Joseph kept them, who, under severe temptation, held firm to the right with the words, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?". Keep them as the noble Daniel kept them, though the lion's den might confront him ; Daniel, against whom the envious princes could find no occasion or fault till they found it concerning the law of his God ; Daniel, who feared nothing else but breaking that divine law.

Said the infamous Cesare Borgia when dying, "I have prepared for all things but one." He had prepared to gratify evil passion, pride, ambition, he had prepared wealth and luxury ; he had prepared for the perpetration of awful crime, but he had *not* prepared to *live*. Shall we not say, "Oh, that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes? Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments."

GETTING BY GIVING.

BY REV. GEORGE S. HICKEY, D. D.,

Of Detroit, Mich.

Text: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Prov. 11:24–25.

This text and the kindred utterance of our Lord, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," might at first be pronounced strange, if not self-contradictory. That scattering is increasing and giving better than getting, or that giving is getting, are veritable paradoxes. They, nevertheless, hold true in nature and grace alike.

I. We confirm this remarkable truth of revelation in our every-day experience. Do we increase bodily strength by hoarding it, or by expending it in proper exercise? Did the blacksmith get that vigorous and mighty right arm by carrying it in a sling, or by swinging a great hammer at the expense of much muscular energy? Nay, it would have stiffened and withered if done up in a sling, for withholding tendeth

G. S. HICKEY.

to poverty. A keen sight and quick ear come not from shutting these organs, but from constantly taxing them. So he who would strengthen his mind must use it much or waste it, so to speak, consuming brain tissue in close thought and mental application. He who never thinks will have no mind, and the strongest intellect will grow weak and impoverished without continual exercise. There must be an expenditure of strength in bending back the bow before the arrow flies, but we would not call such an expenditure waste. Nor is it a waste of ammunition that must be spent in the mere practice of gunnery before one can become a good marksman. There is no real waste of powder in target practice, if it turns out a good hunter who brings home valuable forest game for dinner. Fourth of July fire-works and demonstrations are not a waste so long as they serve to keep alive the patriotic spirit. Each explosion of a boy's fire-cracker expresses an idea—is a voice for liberty. Flowers at Easter-time and toys and gifts at Christmas-time are not wasted, but beautiful expressions of the Christian idea, helping to recall loving memories of Christ, God's unspeakable gift to man. Do you say that you believe in giving "useful" presents? That is well, but it should also be borne in mind that some things have a moral use far superior in value to their mere physical utility. We might go on almost indefinitely illustrating the great truth embodied in our text. The hammer or

pile-driver must be raised by an outlay of force before it can descend effectively. The animal crouches before it springs. A man can jump further by running some distance. We stoop to conquer. Sometimes the load can be started more easily by first "backing" a little—by wasting a little force in the opposite direction. So, too, in the realm of grace. No time is lost by stopping to pray a little in the morning or on prayer-meeting night. The first successful Atlantic cable was laid in prayer. The Christian man who had charge of the undertaking delayed the sailing of the Great Eastern for fifteen minutes to ask God's blessing on the enterprise.

Thus, we see everywhere prevailing the strange but true principle that giving is getting, spending is saving, dividing is multiplying, scattering is increasing, while on the other hand hoarding or withholding is impoverishing. The man who impoverishes his farm by selling off the fertilizing material steals from his own pocket. A team or a preacher kept on half rations cannot be expected to do more than a half service. That is the sweetest well out of which the water is regularly drawn, and that is the healthiest church which cultivates the giving and missionary spirit. "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." If the saying be true that there is no loss without some gain, it is also true that there is no gain without some loss,

—apparent loss. There is surely nothing really lost by a meek yielding and generous giving up. Was not Abraham wonderfully blessed in what was left to him after yielding his right of choice to the selfishness of Lot, who was comparatively impoverished? Selfishness is self-robbery, aye, it is the Devil's narrow-guage road to perdition. If a man lives only to heap up dollars he will find his soul shrinking with every dollar he gets, and "the Devil is the only gainer as he puts it in his pocket." When we hear of shrinkages in church subscriptions, what does it too often mean but that there is a shrinkage in Christian character? It will not do for a man to think he can be a selfish Christian —the expression is an absurdity. If a narrow Christian may be useful at all it must be, like the thin end of a wedge, "mostly for splitting purposes."

Men are sometimes heard to say, "I cannot afford to give." It would be far better to say, "I cannot afford not to give. I shall lose more by keeping; I can get more by giving." It is not God's will that the blessings he bestows should be absorbed or hoarded. He would rather lodge his very best gifts in the hands of those who will scatter them abroad and not store them away in barns. The more magnetism you draw away from a magnet the more there is left, or the more powerful the magnet becomes. So the more a man renounces of self to God the mightier power for good he becomes.

"There was a man, some called him mad,
The more he gave, the more he had."

"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." Scatter a little gospel leaven and it will leaven the whole lump. Sprinkle a little sand on the track and the drive-wheels will get a grip that will draw thousands of tons, when but for the sand the train could not have started. Some horses will hardly be taken from the pasture without a nubbin of corn or handful of oats. Give if you would get. The way to get water from a pump is first to pour a little water into it and then you may fill all the buckets in the neighborhood. The man who closes his hand that he may let out nothing must remember that he as surely lets in nothing, and "selfishness thus outwits itself." All this is as true in spiritual as in temporal matters. The sunlight of happiness is pretty sure to enter the heart that opens in beneficence. The road into happiness is always the road out of self. That man's cup of happiness is very small who has no one for whom he cares more than for himself. It is when we do most for others that we do most good to ourselves. The undoing of one's self is the result of doing nothing for others. Oh, how God must admire an unselfish nature! It is so much like his own divine nature of love and benevolence. The man who loves to enrich others with blessings is constantly enriching himself. Did not Jesus say, "Give, and it shall be given unto

you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over?" The little things which we do for the lowly will fall back on our own hearts as the summer dews fall on the thirsty gardens. As the teacher grows wiser by his own instructions, as the loaves in the hands of Jesus increased by distribution, so it is with bestowing comfort and scattering deeds of kindness. Whole days of comfort will come to your soul for having spent one hour, perhaps, in a visit of mercy to the wretched. John Howard said that the best medicine for a heavy heart is found in ministering to the wants of others. He was a happy man and spent his life in seeking out the oppressed, and visiting the poor and wretched and sick in prisons and hospitals; administering to their temporal wants and telling them of the consolations of religion. Our hearts warm and expand when we attend to these duties, but when we neglect them they grow cold and hard and selfish. In relieving another, the virtuous mind always relieves itself.

II. Our text finds illustration in a nobler sense than that of mere money getting and giving. Men are called upon to devote their higher energies, yea, their very lives sometimes, to advance the cause of righteousness. The more exalted application of this great principle is thus made by the Savior: "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." As the fuel is consumed

but not wasted when it moves the train, so it would seem that it is only through an apparent waste of human life that moral and religious progress is evoked. War is a terrible waste of life and resources, but sometimes wars are necessary. Only through the clashings and surgings of the nations has mankind been developed. War may be the "terrible ploughshare of Fate, preparing the soil for a new harvest of liberty." Every great nation has fought its way out of thralldom into freedom. Greece fought for her liberties, Rome too, and America. Thus it may ever be. Yet war is hardly more than legalized murder. Awful, indeed, is the killing of human beings even in the name of justice, much more so when done in the name of revenge, ambition or selfishness. War is the bloody monster that marches to the wail of widows' sighs and orphans' cries. During our Revolutionary struggle, the brave General Warren fell, mortally wounded. As his life-blood was ebbing away, he exclaimed: "'Tis sweet, Oh, 'tis sweet to die for our country." That night men walked the streets of Boston, saying, "Poor Warren! He was one of our best. Poor foolish man! He has thrown away his life. Why didn't he measure his forces better?" But do we not see now that the tie of Boston to England was severed by that blood-shed? That from that time George the Third no longer ruled? That the beautiful Bunker Hill monument and more perennial fame

were to rise from that crimsoned sod? When Garibaldi was on his way to Rome he was told that if he reached there he would be imprisoned. He replied, "If fifty Garibaldis are imprisoned, let Rome be free."

"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." The blood of the martyrs was not wasted; it was the seed of the Christian church. When Hugh Latimer was being burned at the stake he said to his fellow-martyr Ridley, "Be of good comfort and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by the grace of God, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." Are we not exhorted to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God? We should be willing, if necessary, to give ourselves as Christ gave himself—a self-consecration and self-sacrifice for others. The true law of every human life is sacrifice. This law of self-sacrifice is the divine idea of true manhood which God was endeavoring to elaborate down through all the Jewish system, and which was consummated in the matchless sacrifice of Christ—the representative of the race. This is the grand central idea of Christianity. What is God? God is love. How does love show itself? In sacrifice. What is true sacrifice? It is self offering, giving rather than receiving. What, then, is the grandest conception of God? It is that the eternal law of his life is self-sacrifice for the good of his creation—a continual outflow of divine, self-giving charity. The

death of self is the life of God in us. We should be able to say with St. Paul, "I am crucified with Christ," "I die daily." This daily dying to sin and self is immortal living. The apostle further says, "They which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves." An ancient coin had engraved upon it a bullock between an altar and a plow, and underneath this inscription: "Ready for either;" that is, ready for life or death, for service or sacrifice. If we would have an honored life and a blessed immortality—labor, suffering, sacrifice are the price of them. The men and women whose names have made history glorious have been those alone who hesitated not to pay this price that they might take the crown. Carlyle says, "In a valiant suffering for others, not in a slothful making others suffer for us, does nobleness lie. Every noble crown is, and on earth will forever be a crown of thorns." Charlotte Cushman once said to the school children of Boston that they must give themselves up or they would get nothing back.

Vicarious sacrifice is a general law of nature as well as of grace. That one thing must suffer for the good of another, that life must be sacrificed to give life is an altruistic law that pervades all the universe. In the animal world one order lives upon another. The mineral must give itself up to the life of the vegetable, and the vegetable in turn is given up to sustain the animal.

"Life evermore is fed by death,
In earth, in sea, and sky;
And that a rose may breathe its breath,
Something must die."

Comparing his own gracious sacrifice with this all-penetrating law of vicarious suffering in nature, Christ says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." That is but a poor imitation of Christ that does not include much self denial and suffering. St. Paul rejoiced in tribulation, yet how few are willing to encounter trials and engage in Christian enterprises, unless they are quite sure that it will not prove a source of trouble and bill of expense! Where are our alabaster boxes broken for Christ? Shall we be guilty of saying, "To what purpose this waste?" It is more blessed to give than to receive, but most of us are willing to let the other man receive the blessing.

No true blessedness comes without toil and suffering, if not death itself. Our bread, our knowledge, our national peace, our very life have come to us only through toil, or anguish, or blood of others, most of whom are mouldering in their graves. Many thousand sailors go down to watery graves every year—and all to carry on commerce and trade for others. In the manufacture of foreign lace very old, feeble women often do the finest work, straining their eyes and

wearing their fingers, while the gay and thoughtless ladies carelessly flaunt these delicate fabrics amid the blaze of fashion. So the world goes. One half of it toils in the dark, while the other half dances in the light. There are trades in which the laborers never reach beyond middle life,—trades in which those who follow them are liable to loathsome and torturing disease that always proves fatal in a few years. One hundred and eighty-five men were killed by accident from time to time during the boring of the Hoosac tunnel, and there was an average of one accidental death a day in the boring of the St. Gothard tunnel. So God can afford to lose a workman now and then if his work goes on. We are apt to think a life wasted that is prematurely cut short. When such efficient toilers as John B. Finch and Phillips Brooks die so suddenly in their prime and in the midst of their usefulness, we are prone to murmur at Providence. We speak of great purposes disappointed, of treasures wasted because unseen by man in the depths of the ocean or mine, and of flowers that uselessly scatter their fragrance in the wilderness far from the abode of men, but nothing is trivial, or incomplete or wasted in God's vast economy. We may see only the wrong side of the pattern, but every little thread has its relation and is a factor in God's infinite designs. Many a missionary has done more by his early death to waken the home church than he could have done

by years of service. How many young men and women have been inspired to offer themselves for mission work by the dying words of Melville Cox, our first missionary to Africa, "Though a thousand fall, let Africa be redeemed." No true work was ever wasted, no true life has ever failed. We need to understand better those two perverted words, "wasted" and "failed." A great many things that seem to be unused have a use. The spices and ointments that were lovingly prepared for the Savior's embalming by those holy women were never used for that intended service, for they found not his body as they expected in the empty sepulchre. But did not those costly spices "embalm the loving purpose and lend a sweetness to the act?"

There is no waste in letting God use us. The Christian, like a useful tool, is kept bright only as he is worn and in a sense wasted. A plow or book or broom shows that it is of use as it shows wear. So with a Christian. Better wear out than rust out. David said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Where are our Davids? Who is now in danger of breaking down from over-much zeal or excess of labor for Christ? Are not scores dying spiritually for neglect of work and lack of holy fire? Under fear or pretense of carrying zeal to excess thousands are content to be without a spark of it. There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty

of spirit. Think of St. Paul's steadfast and ardent zeal! When the prophet Agabus predicted that the great apostle would be made a prisoner and bound at Jerusalem, and his sympathizing friends besought him not to go there he nobly answered: "What, mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus." A religion that costs nothing—no sacrifice of money and higher energies—is good for nothing. Raleigh flung down his plush coat for Queen Elizabeth to walk on over a muddy place and received for his reward a proud queen's favor. So true love for Christ spares no charge, no pains in honoring him. Nothing is wasted that glorifies God. I imagine he would like to see our religion overflowing more to a perishing world, run to waste so to speak, nor would he have us so much afraid of wasting our zeal, our charity, our money, our vital energy.

> "Self ease is pain; the only rest
> Is labor for a worthy end;
> A toil that gains with what it yields,
> And scatters to its own increase,
> And hears while sowing outward fields
> The harvest song of inward peace."

The highest gift we can present to God is that of personal consecration. Give to Jesus your heart's best affection and he will give himself to you. Anoint Christ's head, as did Mary of Bethany, and he will anoint thy heart. True love to God exhausts not

itself, but strengthens by loving and by working for him.

"Numb and weary in the mountains, wouldst thou sleep
amidst the snow?
Chafe that frozen form beside thee, and together both shall
glow."

Ah, yes! "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." Do you lose anything when you allow your neighbor to light his candle by your own? Let your fellow travelers along life's dark and dangerous way light their torches by yours, and then you and they may walk in the increased light of many torches. It will tend to poverty to withhold your gospel light. A candle hid under a bushel is indeed safe from the wind, but of what benefit is it to anybody? Better burn and waste on some lofty headland of duty, where the winds howl, and the storms rage, and the waves dash, and dangers threaten, sending far out over the dismal waters a friendly spark to guide some lone mariner tossed about on the treacherous sea of life into the haven of eternal security.

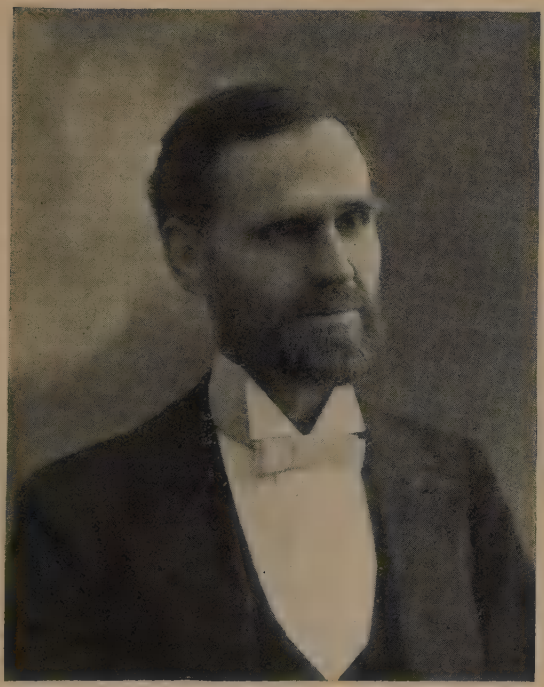
THE GREAT SACRIFICE.

BY REV. R. H. BREADY, D. D.,

Pastor M. E. Church, Sturgis, Mich.

Text: "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." Heb. 12:2.

All thinking people appreciate a favor in proportion to the sacrifice made to confer it. Let us suppose that when Napoleon was sentenced to banishment, a man in abject poverty, living in obscurity, had offered to take his place. There would have been no great appreciation, as there was little or no sacrifice. But if a man in affluence, son of a king, heir to a throne, had offered himself as a substitute, the world would have been astounded, the friends of the emperor would have applauded. There is but one principle that makes the latter greater than the former, and that is sacrifice. If a man were to donate one hundred thousand dollars to Albion College, his name would be registered on the page of Michigan Methodism. His sins would be remembered no more by the friends of the college. But before inscribing his name on the banner of merit, investigate and ascertain how much there is in the gift of that that makes it



R. H. BREADY.

great in the eye of Heaven, namely, sacrifice, and you find little. A poor man gives five dollars, but his name is not mentioned, and the sum is forgotten as soon as paid. But it may be mentioned in every mansion, inscribed on every banner, and written on every bulletin board in heaven. The gift is remembered world without end because of the sacrifice. A class leader said to his pastor, "I am going to deny myself a new overcoat, so I may be able to give ten dollars to missions." But before the stormy blasts of winter began to blow he was taken sick unto death, and in the final ordeal he said, "I am going to a land where everlasting Spring abides and never-withering flowers." He put on robes of ascension, and wings of ascension, and flew home to glory. As a result of the cleansing blood, plus sacrifice, he is standing on a sea of glass mingled with fire, palmed, robed and crowned. Let us consult the highest authority. As Jesus sat over against the treasury he beheld rich men casting in of their abundance. Christ did not condemn or commend. But at last a poor widow came and cast in two mites, the smallest Jewish coin—one fifth of a cent. The Savior said, "Of a truth I say unto you this poor widow has cast in more than they all." The deed is noble or ignoble in proportion to the sacrifice made to perform it. Judging from this standard we are able to get a partial conception of what Christ has done for us.

We have a very inadequate idea of what Christ has done for us if we confine ourselves to his history between Bethlehem and Calvary. If Christ were only a man, as some teach, and did not exist prior to his incarnation, if he made no sacrifice but what he made on earth, if he left nothing but the carpenter's tools, and gave up nothing but a short life of toil to sit on a throne forever, to receive adoration from angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, world without end, well might he endure the cross and despise the shame. In order to do justice to our Lord we must look at the sacrifice he made, which naturally brings us to the study of his divinity and pre-existence.

Some say that Christ was only a good man; the only perfect being who ever trod the earth, but he was not the Son of God. All will readily admit that a deceiver is not a good man. A stranger comes to our city representing himself as the son of Abraham Lincoln. Every one pays him deference on account of his father. However, subsequent investigation makes the discovery that he was under an assumed name. Would you call him a good man, or an impostor? Christ said, I am the Son of God. If he is not the Son of God he was untruthful, therefore not a good man. So we must accept him as the Son of God, as he represents himself, or reject him as a stupendous fraud. As to the pre-existence of Christ, we have

only to weigh the following Scriptures: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." We might change the phraseology without altering the meaning: "In the beginning was the Son, and the Son was with God, and the Son was God." Abraham lived about nineteen hundred years before Christ, yet he said, "Before Abraham was, I am." "After me cometh a man who was preferred before me, for he was before me." "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Now, if Christ is only a man, and if he did not exist prior to his incarnation, the Scriptures are false and come from the heart and lips of a conscious hypocrite. Then if we believe the Word, it is blasphemy to deny his divinity and pre-existence. Christ was co-equal, co-eternal with the Father, of the same substance, power and eternity.

We shall examine a part of the work our Savior did before his birth in Bethlehem. He is the creator of all things. John says, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him." Bishop Simpson said in one of his great sermons that man had not made anything new. He simply shapes, molds, and builds. That floating palace is wonderful indeed, plowing the boisterous main, propelled by the invisible arm of steam. But for thousands of years the steam was bubbling away,

trying to say, "Harness me, and I will do your bidding." In the beginning Christ made the steam power and all the material for the harness. The electric light, the electric telegraph, the submarine cable, are wonderful, but Christ made all the material when he flung this world from the right hand of his power. Everything was made by him, from the crawling worm to the singing angel, from the flower spangled sward to the star spangled heavens. Let Paul tell it: "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him."

Let us briefly look into the heavens and see the magnitude of the work our Savior did before he was cradled in Bethlehem's manger. Take the sun; roll together one thousand worlds like this, two thousand, ten thousand, and you have not the sun. Roll together one million, two hundred and forty-five thousand worlds like this and you have the volume of the sun. We are not surprised that this great orb can hold the halter and let the earth play around him at the rate of one thousand miles per minute. To obtain a more vivid conception of Christ's work, let us get aboard an express train at the sun and visit a few of his stations. The first stop is Mercury, thirty-five million miles away. The second stop is Venus, sixty-six million miles away. Let us pass the Earth and

Moon, as they are only flag stations when compared with the others. Let us not stop until we reach Mars one hundred and forty-five million miles away. We stop next at Jupiter, the prince of all planets, four hundred and eighty million miles away. We stop next at Saturn with his shining moons and glistening rings, eight hundred and eighty-one million miles away. The next and last stop is at Neptune, out on the frontier of God's kingdom, two billion, eight hundred million miles of a run. If Adam and Eve could have started on a wedding trip aboard a modern express train traveling the line described, it would take three thousand years more for them to reach Neptune. I think the honeymoon would have been past before the wedding trip would have been completed.

Light is the swiftest thing known. It will belt the globe five times before we can say the word. Astronomers say that the nearest fixed star is so far away that it takes three hundred years for the light to reach us, traveling at the rate indicated ; others are so far away that it would take three hundred thousand years for the light to reach us. Those mighty orbs were planned, made and poised by our Redeemer, marching and counter-marching under the orders of our Lord. This is a part of the work he did before his incarnation. Hear Isaiah's eloquent description of him : " In the year King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and his train

filled the temple, and above it stood the seraphim, and each one had six wings. (In the East it was counted disrespectful to appear in the presence of a superior with undressed feet. Some one has said that the angels knowing the custom on earth observed the same in heaven.) And with twain they covered their feet." "They need no candle in heaven, neither light of the sun for the Lord God giveth them light." The glory and light emanating from Christ were so great and overwhelming that they had to use a pair of wings to cover their faces. But there was a pair left for flying. I do not believe that we shall sit down in heaven and sing ourselves away to everlasting bliss; we shall have something to do. The two wings left for flying are very suggestive. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" And one cried, Holy! And a second answered, Holy! I fancy that thousands of thousands join the trio crying, "Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God Almighty, heaven and earth are full of thy glory!" Look at him sitting upon the throne of the eternal, surrounded by angels and archangels. Planets, suns and systems, the production of his own mind, the workmanship of his hands rolling in grandeur beneath his feet.

How can we harmonize this power and glory with the text, "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame?" What

joy could be set before him greater than the joy described? A king is sitting on his throne, surrounded by his distinguished advisers. Fast by the throne there is a river. His little boy who is dearer to him than life falls in. The king doffs his crown, leaps into the mad waters, seizes the boy and rescues him from death. The king was lost in the father. The joy of saving his child was more to him than the throne. Christ looked over the battlements from the throne of his glory and saw the world perishing. He laid aside his royal robes and crown to bear the cross and endure the shame to save a perishing world. The conclusion is that the joy of saving sinners was greater to Christ than all the glory he had with the Father and the holy angels. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" An aged man in England said, "I have a good home here, but I could have a better one with my son in New York, but between me and the better home is the stormy Atlantic. I would not cross it for the difference in the homes." Between Christ and the joy set before him there was an awful sea. But the joy of saving a perishing world impelled him, and he launched his boat on the bloody sea and sounded it to its very depths in Gethsemane, Pilot's Hall and Calvary, to save a poor sinner like me. He wore a

robe of derision that we might wear a robe of righteousness; he wore a crown of thorns that we might wear a crown of life; he ascended the cross that we might ascend to heaven. "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

Look at Christ on the cross. Never was there a death attended with such astounding wonders. When the great battles of our Civil War were fought, thousands of the dead and dying lay with their backs to the field, their feet to the enemy, and their faces toward heaven, but nature was unmoved. The stars looked down in calm composure; the moon walked heedlessly through the heavens, coldly kissing the lips of the dead, the wounded, and the dying. When Abraham Lincoln, the savior under God of the nation, fell by the hand of the bloody assassin, nature never slipped a cog. The death of Christ, how different! The sun drew the wing of night over his flaming countenance; the earth trembled; the thunders rolled, and the lightnings flashed. Solid marble was shattered to fragments; the vail of the temple was rent in twain; the dead came forth. Behold him on the cross; his murderers, bowing in mockery before him, saying: "Hail! King of the Jews. If thou be the Son of God come down from the cross." Look at him, blood

dripping from his feet, blood dripping from his hands, blood coursing down his face.

> "Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
> Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"

Who can measure the depth of his love? No human line is long enough to fathom it, and not an angel in heaven could scale its heights. Paul in vain attempted it by going from height to height, from altitude to altitude even to the third heaven; he exclaimed, "Unsearchable, past finding out." Love wept in his tears, breathed in his sighs, and spoke in his groans.

"Praise him from the heavens. Praise him all his angels. Praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light. Kings of the earth and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth; both young men and maidens; old men and children. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

THE DAMNATION ARMY, ITS VICTIMS AND ITS SPONSORS.

BY REV. GEORGE B. KULP,

Pastor Second Street M. E. Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Text: "And the drinking was according to the law." Esther 1:8.

"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken." Hab. 2:15.

I purpose talking to you to-night as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, as a minister of the Christian religion, as a citizen interested in the welfare of all those around me. I claim most emphatically that the position I take during this discussion is the position of the church of God, and the position of the church of God should be the attitude of every individual Christian. The only inquiry for a Christian man to make as he enters upon the consideration of the saloon question is this, where does God Almighty stand? If the Lord Jesus Christ were upon earth in person to-day where would he stand? If he was at the polls with a ballot in his hands, with whom would he vote? Find out where the brewers, distillers,

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saloon keepers, harlots and drunkards are, and make up your mind God is on the other side, and there you and I must be or be condemned.

The church and the saloon occupy positions of open, irreconcilable hostility, and one must go down. And when I remember Jesus Christ said of his church, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," I am ready to predict the saloon must go, and it will. There never was a moral reform movement that did not owe its bone and sinew to the church. The anti-slavery agitation began in the church and was waged so fiercely that it rent asunder the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, but the work still went on until it entered the politics of the nation and slavery was put to the sword. The agitation for the suppression of the saloon to-day comes from men and women trained in the churches, and now is the opportune time when the church must move forward, must agitate, must thunder the word of God against the traffic, and she must do it through her ministers in the pulpit and her laymen in the pews ; the minister of the gospel cannot separate his personal responsibility from his office, nor can he separate his responsibility from his act of suffrage. Called of God, he dare not consult his personal interest or popularity ; he must obey his heavenly calling. The stability of human governments depends on their harmony with the divine, and the highest duty of the minister is to lead the people

to obedience, to righteousness. Abraham Lincoln said, "God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time." Neither can an honest man. We know where God stands, for in the text he says, "Woe be to him that putteth thy bottle to thy neighbor's lips and maketh him drunken." The editor of the Michigan Advocate tersely puts it when he says, "The struggle of the American home, the school and the church against the combined power of brewer, brothel and saloon death trap is but another putting of the declaration of war between heaven and hell."

We bring this subject before you as we do because we want to save the boys of our city and arouse you to your responsibility for the liquor traffic in our midst. During the Chicago convention one of the delegates met a burly red-faced resident of that city, who had just been patronizing the bar. In the course of conversation this citizen said, "What are you fellows trying to do down at the battery? You are hot on temperance I see by the papers, do you think you can make a temperance man of me?" "No," said the delegate, "we evidently couldn't do much with you, but we are after your boy." The fellow dropped his jocular tone and said seriously, "Well, I guess you have the right of it. If somebody had been after me when I was a boy I should be a better man to-day." But the boys of our city are in no danger. Aren't they? A few weeks ago Mrs. J. of ——— went into

a saloon in that city, read the Bible and prayed. While there she noticed quite a boy, and when she went out he followed her and said, "Madame, I am ashamed of myself that you found me in such a place. I wouldn't have my mother know it for the world. I am not in the habit of going into a saloon." Mrs. J. asked him, "Where do your parents live?" and the answer was, "in ———." Perhaps that boy is the son of some mother here to-night. I want to save the boys from blasted reputation and eternal ruin. A magician came before his audience, and bringing a young man with him said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I want to show you my power; by a few passes with my hand I will turn this young man into a beast," and then waving his hand a few times the young man became a beast. The people applauded, but soon some of the more thoughtful became fearful and cried, "Transform him, make him a man again," but the magician answered, "I can't do it, I can change men into beasts, but I can never restore the man." That magician is the liquor traffic, and that power to transform men into beasts is given to the traffic by the people. Mothers may cry, "Give me my boy again," but he'll never come—you may have a sot, a wreck, a shadow, but your pure clean boy—*never*.

The subject of this sermon is, The Damnation Army, its Victims and its Sponsors. Do you think that too severe? Listen to what some public men have

said about the liquor traffic. Lord Chesterfield called saloon keepers, "Artists in human slaughter." Ruskin said they were "moral assassins." Carlyle spoke of public houses, as "seething hells of vice and immorality." Bunyan called drink selling "an infernal traffic." Wesley declared, "The money received in exchange for drinks is *blood money*." Robert Hall spoke of drinks as "liquid fire and distilled damnation," while Mr. Walters, of the London Times, charged it with being "the Devil in solution." We mean it, and we repeat it, the saloons of this city are a diversion of that Damnation Army that is hurrying more people unprepared into eternity than war, pestilence and famine combined.

Before looking at the division, let us look at the army. The nation supports 200,000 saloons, which absorb three millions of dollars daily, or the total sum of over one thousand millions of dollars each year. Each one of these saloons seduces at least one boy a year, a low estimate, presenting the appalling spectacle of two hundred thousand young men ruined each year, or a million every five years, a greater destruction than that incurred by the Civil War. It is estimated each saloon controls at least ten votes, giving us two million votes influenced by this national curse, the liquor traffic, and there isn't a great political party in the nation to-day that dares to put itself squarely in array against the enemy. The saloons in many places

are political headquarters, schools in which criminals are trained, armories where they equip themselves for the battle against the peace and rights of society, an enemy to all purity, all godliness, all homes. To be seen entering or coming out of a saloon is of itself a suspicious circumstance, and the law so regards it. A judge in one of our courts said to a man who pleaded innocence, "You, McCauley, were arrested in a saloon with two thieves. You would have gotten in no trouble had you avoided evil company and objectionable places." If it is not suspicious to be seen in a saloon why does the saloon provide back doors, screens and frosted windows for the purpose of protecting their customers from the view of their friends who may be passing by? And yet right here in our city we have 180 bars over which liquid damnation is dealt out, to the detriment of the man physically, and spiritually, and the ruin of his home. In Java and Sumatra they have a tree called by the natives "the tree of death." They say its breath will kill birds and even human beings. A traveler one day chasing a bird of paradise saw it drop to the ground lifeless and without apparent cause. He found the bird under the tree which gave forth the peculiar odor described by the natives, and he knew it to be the tree of death. A faint perfume like chloroform came from the flowers, and breathing it he became almost insensible. We have no death tree in our city; if one was to grow

near your home you would uproot it to save your boy—*unless you could get a revenue out of it.* But we have numerous bars flourishing with your permission ; bars to pull down reputations, to destroy homes, to rob women and children of happiness, to take the bloom out of their cheeks, to hasten men hell-ward, that the owners of these bars may fatten on the griefs and woes of the possessors of depraved appetites, for perhaps you know that a saloon-keeper can get rich if he has twenty regular customers. Of course the list has to be recruited often, for when the old customer gets to be a bum his patronage is no longer profitable, and the boys, your boy perhaps, will step in as a new recruit. Aye, a big division of the damnation army right here in this city. Not because we cannot get rid of it, but because there are so many professing Christians, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Catholics who prefer their party prejudices and party victories to siding with God Almighty on election day against the saloon. But we will talk of the responsibility farther on.

Let us inquire next as to the victims of the traffic. Read the daily papers, scan their columns and see how many men and women are before the recorder for drunkenness. Said the judge the other day to a victim, " Bill, why don't you stop this kind of work ? " The answer was, " I can't go by a saloon door, I must go in." The drinking man is not the only victim ; the

woman who never drinks, the innocent wife, suffers even though "the drinking is according to law." Read this book of Esther from which the text is taken and learn this fact, the first divorce on record was caused by drinking "according to law." Licensed drinking produced the first divorce. Twelve thousand women in New York State procured divorces from drunken husbands. Three hundred thousand divorces in this country in the last twenty years, and the most of them caused by licensed rumselling, and in the greater number of instances the woman is the sufferer. A gentleman in one of the schools was giving a lesson on the human heart. He had sent to the butcher's for a sheep's heart, and he allowed the class to see, touch and handle it for themselves. Then he asked the question, "What is the difference between a sheep's heart and the heart of a man or woman?" One poor, pale looking boy held up his hand to answer. "Well, B., what difference is there, do you think?" "Why, sir," said he, "a sheep's heart is the softest, for you can bite a sheep's heart, but a woman's heart you break." The secret of the answer? That boy's mother died of a broken heart, the result of a husband's brutality and desertion. Here is the will of a frequenter of the saloon as he wrote it: "I leave to society a ruined character, a wretched example, and a memory that will rot. I leave my parents as much sorrow as they can bear. I leave to my brothers and

sisters as much shame as I could bring on them. I leave my wife a broken heart, a life of shame. I leave to each of my children poverty, ignorance, and the remembrance that their father filled a drunkard's grave." Well might he remember the children, for they, too, are victims. In Kittanning, Pa., they lately closed the saloons, and a merchant tells how a woman came to trade. Said she, "I want a pair of shoes for a little girl." "What number?" "Well, she is twelve years old." "But what number does she wear?" "I do not know." "But what number did you last buy?" "She never had a pair in her life. You see her father used to drink when we had the saloons, but now they are closed he doesn't drink any more, and this morning he said to me, 'Mother, I want you to go down town and buy a pair of shoes for sissy, for she has never had a pair in her life,' and I thought if I told you her age you would know what size to give me." Think of it, children of this great republic robbed of shoes that a few idlers may be supported. Oh, the woe! Oh, the degradation that comes to homes through this legalized traffic! In London, lethal chambers exist for the purpose of destroying vagrant dogs, that are quietly poisoned by carbonic acid gas. We need no lethal chambers for destroying men, the state is licensing agents to do that work, and they are doing it most effectively.

Let us now consider who are the sponsors of the

liquor traffic. Where does the responsibility rest? Some time ago I read an account of a burglary in old St. Paul's church in New York city. The burglar had packed up two bundles containing one thousand dollars' worth of silk and satin draperies and vestments, and in his searching he came across the communion wine. He drank it, and overpowered by the deep draughts of the rich old communion wine, he was found in the morning by a policeman and taken to the station too drunk to tell his name. That kind of a church, administering the communion in alcoholic wines, must share the responsibility for the drunkenness in the land. But now let us go into the saloon and see who is responsible for it, and you point to the saloon keeper and say, "He is sponsor for the saloon, he is responsible for the traffic carried on here." You are mistaken, my friend. Judge Field of the United States Supreme Court has decided that no man has a natural right to sell liquor. He says, "There is no inherent right of the citizen to sell intoxicating liquors by retail. It is not a privilege of a citizen of the State or of the United States." Then it follows that the only right a man can have is *a legal right*. Who in the name of high heaven gives the saloon keeper the right to scatter death and liquid damnation all over the State, all over the city? Who is responsible for our bars? Abraham Lincoln said in his Gettysburg address, "This is a government of the people, by the

people, for the people." We, the people, make the laws that give the saloon keeper the right upon payment of a tax to sell liquor for us. We are in the business. Go into a saloon and ask the proprietor by what right he sells, he does not claim a moral right, nor a natural right, but he at once points you to two papers, one is from the municipality and tells you the saloon keeper has the right to keep the bottle there, and the other is from the U. S. government to witness that he has the right to fill the bottle with the stuff and to sell it, or in other words, this being a government of the people the man is rumseller for their sovereign majesties, the people. In this nation the people rule. Let them rise in their might against any unjust law, any iniquity, and they will banish it, but they are so forbearing and long-suffering, especially if the blood money will lay their sidewalks and clean their streets, that they are willing to damn the young men of the city if they can have the license money in our treasury. Take the barrels of beer and other liquors that come into our city and pile them up, make a pyramid of them, examine them and on every barrel you will find evidence that "we, the people," are in the business; they are all marked U. S.—*us*. I admit the saloon keeper is more intimately connected with the business than you are; he is doing your unclean work, but he is no more closely connected with it than the man who owns the property

used for a saloon. I would as quickly handle the stuff over the bar as rent the property to another for saloon purposes. One is just as wicked as the other, and in the day of reckoning with Almighty God, the saloon keeper and the landlord and the bondsmen will stand together equally guilty. Back of the saloon keeper are the bondsmen and the property owner, and back of them are the people who favor license, and also all those who refuse to avail themselves of the law we have by which we could close them if we would. In Van Buren Co. the saloon is banished under our local option law. When Rhode Island was carried for prohibition we thanked God and did some hurrahing, but right here in Southern Michigan we have four tiers of counties, a territory twice the size of Rhode Island, from which we could banish liquor by our local option law, Wayne Co. being the only exception, and yet every political party refuses to avail itself of this law. We have saloons because of the moral cowardice and prejudices of the better class of citizens. The man or the party that howls for national or state probibition and yet will not avail himself of county prohibition when he can have it by the law of the State, is terribly inconsistent, caring more for the party than banished saloons. Well, is there any hope? Yes, for

"Right is right, since God is God—
And right the day shall win.
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

The time clock of God Almighty is ringing out the hour of high noon. He is speaking to the conscience of the nation. The time has come when the rum power must be destroyed or the nation die. Sin is a reproach unto any people. Jehovah calls to righteousness; "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and seek through the broad places thereof if ye can find a man," said God to his servant, the prophet. Men are needed to-day, men with convictions and the courage to express them. When ministers in the pulpit and laymen in the pew stand firmly and united against the saloon then it will surely be destroyed.

When one emperor tried to rival another in building a most splendid coliseum in the second century he sent for a Greek architect. "Make me a coliseum," said he, "you shall have everything in the way of means, but make me the best in the world. When it is completed we will have a gala day, and crown you." The coliseum was built. Yonder on his emerald throne sat the emperor, and by his side the Greek architect. The emperor arose and said to the eighty thousand people before him, "We have come to a great day; we have the finest building in the world; we have met to do honor to the Greek architect." Then stooping down he cried, "Let in the lions, bring in the Christians." Then from his seat rose the Greek and said with a voice that penetrated

every part of the building, "Sir, I, too, am a Christian." The maddened multitude hurled him over on the pavement below, where he lay crushed, bleeding, dying. That was sublime courage. He had convictions and declared them in the face of death. Such men and such courage are needed to-day; men who will stand for God though they stand alone. Go south, and they will show you the slave pen and the auction notice of the sale of men and women as slaves. Only thirty-five years have passed since these things. Thirty-five years more and the legalized saloon will be looked upon as a relic of our barbarism, and men will wonder at our greed for gain that led us to license such a soul-destroying business. Were it not for the enormous foreign immigration rum would be banished to-day from the greater part of the land, but oppose what may, there can be no compromise. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the men and women who are following him, must follow him against all evil, by their prayers, their example, *their votes*, and when men vote on God's side, regardless of all else, then right will triumph and the saloon become a thing of the past.

THE THREE CROSSES: A NEW YEAR VISION.

BY REV. M. D. CARRELL,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, Alma.

Text: "Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." John 19:18.

We stand to-day at the opening of a New Year. I believe it is customary for business men to take an account of stock at this season of the year. I suppose this inventory has two objects in view: First, to ascertain how much has been gained during the twelve months past. Second, to ascertain what assets are at hand for another year's investment. I am not a business man in the common acceptance of that term. I have no stock of merchandise piled high on shelf or counter. I control no busy plant where power of steam or electricity, through rolling shaft and whirling wheel and singing spindle or ponderous hammer, is constantly transforming raw material from some one of the three kingdoms of nature into comfort and luxury. But what of that? Has the flight of time no significance to me because I do not deal in silks and

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ribbons, or put my best thought into ingenious combinations of wood or iron? Is not the primary investment common to all men whatever avenue of material achievement they may follow—an investment of the inherent self, the powers and possibilities inherent in the being—are not the issues here of inestimably greater importance than any question of material progress or of material promise? It seems to me they are.

And with this seeming comes this further thought that this inherent wealth of soul, this stock of soul assets, this workshop of soul activity and achievement should have its time for inventory, at least one day of the year, when trade should hush its clamor and wheels and spindles should stand still, while careful, prayerful estimate is made of past gains and future possibilities. Last Sunday we went with shepherds to the cradle of the Christ-child, and with the wise men from the east as they brought to his humble birthplace their tribute of gold, frankincense and myrrh. But the joy and gladness of Christmas time cannot always remain with us. Life has its serious, thoughtful hours. We face the stern realities of the future. And so I turn a few pages of this gospel story and I am gazing on a tragic scene. Three Roman crosses stand before me on a hill outside a city wall, and on each cross hangs a human form in the agony of death. 'Tis not a pleasant vision that rises before me here. Gladly

would I turn away from it if loyalty to truth would let me. But it will not. I must face the stern fact of human life and destiny. And this hill outside the walls of Jerusalem with its ghastly crosses is as real in human history as that other hill up which the shepherds climbed one night with glad hearts to find and worship a new-born babe. I may refuse to think of it, but that cannot alter the past. Every Bethlehem has its Calvary; over against every cradle stands a casket; every birth-cry passes some time into a death groan; each life that begins must also end. And these swift years are but drum-beats to which we keep step in our march toward the grave. Oh, how swiftly they beat! How rapidly we march! How soon we are gone! How true the Psalmist's conception, "We spend our years as a tale that is told! The days of our years are three-score years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be four-score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away."

Standing at the threshold of another year—God only knows if it be the last for some of us—it seems to me this vision of the crosses is very suggestive. If we are wise I am sure we shall not refuse to look upon it attentively, and I am persuaded that if with open, candid hearts we look attentively upon it we shall find it not a vision of unpleasant warnings and possible perils only, but a vision of hope as well; a vision full

of the assurance of divine help, help adequate for any trials which may await us amid the unknown contingencies of another year ; vision of hope not for a year only, but for that eternity unmeasured by years, into which some of us will probably have entered before another twelve months have gone.

The vision of three crosses, "on either side one and Jesus in the midst," suggests to me God's help for the weakest and most needy child of sin. To me the very form of the sentence in which John brings the vision before me is significant. "On either side one, and Jesus in the midst." Commentators have queried whether it was the Jews, who in order to heap greater insult upon the crucified man of Nazareth and his followers, requested that the two condemned criminals be executed one on either side of him, or Pilate ordered it out of contempt for the Jews. Whether human malice prompted it at all, or whether from its human side it was what we call a coincidence merely, we may never know. But I can not avoid the feeling that this vision of Golgotha as it stands so prominently in the history would not be complete with less than three crosses. I know with what supreme contempt the enemies of the gospel have in all ages spoken of the humble birth and ignoble death of its founder. But, after all, when you come to think of it, is there not a harmony running all through this wonderful life ? And is not Calvary, after all, the natural and

complete complement of Bethlehem? What more fitting than that the first strange faces into which his infant eyes should look should have been the poverty-pinched, careworn faces of the shepherds, fresh from their lives of toil? And what more fitting than that amid the agonies of death he should mingle his dying groans with those of the most helpless and wretched of earth's despairing millions, whom it was his mission to save? You will remember that they criticised him all along the months of his public ministry because he persisted in associating with the poor and the sinful. Passing along the streets of Capernaum one day he saw sitting at the receipt of customs a poor, despised, ostracised publican, Matthew by name. Jesus looked with pity upon the poor, lonely soul, and said to Matthew, "Come, leave your unholy calling and follow me." I suppose it was many a day since Matthew had heard a kind word from a brother Jew, and it broke his heart at once. He arose and immediately resigning his position, became a disciple of Jesus. And in the gratitude of his heart, that he had found new hope and a new life, Matthew made a feast, a great reception, for his deliverer; and when the table was spread, behold, around it gathered many publicans and sinners, men who like himself needed sympathy and help, human and divine. But when the Pharisees saw it they gathered about the disciples of Jesus and said, "Why eateth your Master with

publicans and sinners ?" But Jesus answered them, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

He passed one day through Jericho, and there was a man in Jericho who was a chief among the publicans. He had been very skilful in gathering the oppressive taxes of the Roman conquerors from his impoverished fellow Hebrews, and was very rich. But in the midst of his ill-gotten gains he found no peace. What can the mere possession of hoarded gold do toward satisfying a hungry soul ? Zaccheus heard of the prophet of Galilee ; of his friendship for needy men like himself, and when word went along the streets of the old city that this friend of publicans was to pass that way, the penitent heart of Zaccheus bounded with hope. Eagerly he went with the throng of the curious as they gathered along the way by which the prophet and his disciples were to enter the city. But Zaccheus was short of stature, and others crowded in front of him and his heart sank as he feared he should not be able to get a glimpse even of the face and form of the friend and helper of sinful men. And then a happy thought came to him. He climbed a sycamore tree and looked out over the excited throng. And now the Master came slowly on, walking in the midst of his followers, turning his kind gaze full of tenderest sympathy upon the faces of

those who throng the narrow way. We can imagine how over one sinful but penitent heart, beating amid the foliage of the tree, swept successive emotions of hope and fear as that little group with him in the midst of them drew near. Will the helper of needy men go past without deigning to notice him? Why not? What had Zaccheus ever done to merit even a glance from the Son of God? Ah! It is not what we have done, but what we *are* that attracts his attention. And can you find it recorded anywhere that a penitent heart yearned in vain for his notice? Look! The Master pauses. I imagine I see some eminently respectable citizen of Jericho, alderman perhaps, maybe the mayor himself, stepping forward, supposing that, of course, the sight of his self-complacent face has arrested the Rabbi's steps. But no. His tender gaze is turned toward the tree and a voice full of compassion says, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down for to-day I am going to stop at your house." Then again the tongues of the selfish and self-righteous were loosed and they whispered, "Ah, there he goes, this great prophet of yours! He is going to be the guest of a man who is a sinner!"

One day a Pharisee whose name was Simon did condescend to invite this man, who seemed so regardless of the social proprieties in choosing his associates, to dine at his house. But even the seclusion of this place could not keep him from those who needed his

ministry of help. Into the Pharisee Simon's elegant banquet hall pressed a poor outcast woman, victim of man's pitiless lust, and kneeling at Jesus' feet she broke over them a box of costly, perfumed ointment, and mingled with it her tears, and kissed his feet as she wiped them with her flowing hair. I think I can see the expression of contempt upon the hard, haughty face of Rabbi Simon as he says within himself, "If this man were a prophet as he claims to be, he would know what kind of woman this is." But Jesus unmasked his hypocrisy and most scathingly rebuked his neglect of the courtesies of hospitality in that beautiful parable of the creditor and the two forgiven debtors, and then, turning toward the broken-hearted penitent at his feet, he bade her go in peace forgiven, and as we believe, transformed by his infinite compassion.

Why have I given so much time to these beautiful incidents from the gospel story? Because they illustrate so fully and so forcefully what I mean when I say this vision of three crosses on Calvary tells me of divine help as I stand face to face with the new experiences of an untried year. "Jesus in the midst of them"—in the midst of sinful men, in the midst of despairing men—Jesus, the expression of God's fathomless pity and omnipotent grace, yesterday, to-day, to-morrow, always near, always available—*that* is the core and substance of this gospel. From Gabriel's

first announcement to the Virgin Mother, until "it is finished" burst from his dying lips, that is the burden of this gospel: help for sinful men and women.

Standing at the threshold of a new year, facing the unknown contingencies of the future, that fact ought to have large place in all our thoughts. It ought to be the largest item in our list of available assets. What would you think of the business man who in taking account of his stock and laying his plans for this year, 1898, should utterly forget that he had in bank a deposit of $50,000, available at any time? What then shall we say of the man who stands amid the moral vicissitudes of this new year, absolutely ignoring the measureless deposit of divine grace which this gospel puts within his constant reach? And yet I am afraid there are many men and women who pride themselves on their forethought and prudence in all other matters, who are going straight forward toward certain and irretrievable moral bankruptcy and spiritual ruin, this year and all years, because they do not use the help which God's love makes available. Many good resolutions that will be broken before the year is a month old have been made during these first hours of a new year. Many a man has said to the drink which is drowning all the finer feelings and best aspirations of his manhood, "Stay there with the dying year. I'll not defile my lips nor stain my soul with you again." But he will.

This is not the first time he has made such a resolution. And probably it will not be the last. The same old appetite, kindled by the fire of hell and fed by constant indulgence, will assert itself and he will fall again. With deeper sense of his own helplessness and utter degradation, *fall again*. Many a man has said to profanity, "That is the last time. Die, thou black spirit of profanity, die thou with the expiring year. I will stand in this new year free from thy debasing thrall." But he will swear again. The same passions that during the year 1897 burst forth again and again in a torrent of imprecation slumber in his soul and will awake on occasion. They have not been removed at all. And so with other passions and sinful appetites which men have resolved to abandon. The resolutions are right and proper. I haven't a particle of sympathy, but only contempt, for the disposition to ridicule these new year resolutions. God pity our humanity when there shall not be left in it enough of its own inherent dignity to cause it to rise once in a while in revolt against the sins that degrade it, and resolve to conquer them, even though it fail, as fail it must and will, over and over again.

What can a man do, then? *Nothing*. That is what Calvary means. A man can do nothing. That is what our vision of the three crosses means; a man can do nothing. If man had not been helpless, if by good resolutions he could have saved himself from

moral bankruptcy, the Son of God would never have hung that day on a Roman cross between two thieves. What can a man do, then? *Everything.* That is what Calvary means. A man can do everything. That is what our vision of the three crosses means: a man can do everything. A contradiction, you say? Not at all. If it had not been possible, by the aid of divine grace, to make the human soul complete victor over sin and restore man to the dignity of his unfallen state, the Son of God would never have hung that day on a Roman cross between two thieves. And so man need not despair. Blessed be God, these resolutions *can* be kept. Sinful appetites and passions *may be* eradicated. The awful bondage *may be* broken, and we *may stand* at the new year with enfranchised soul, facing a better life. God calls us to it, and Calvary is his pledge of adequate help.

And this vision of the three crosses, "on either side one and Jesus in the midst," suggests how this adequate help, available to all, may be made actual to me. I do not know who those two men were whom Pilate's soldiers hung upon the cross that day. Matthew and Mark call them robbers. St. Luke calls them malefactors, while St. John simply says, "two others." We know that Judea, in the days of Tiberius Caesar, was a hot-bed of revolt against the Roman yoke. While sycophant high priests and rulers, Pharisee or Sadducee, might pander to the oppressors for

the sake of Roman preferment or Roman gold, the proud Jewish yeomanry hated the very ground a Roman trod upon. The mountain fastnesses offered splendid hiding places for Jewish patriots, fanatical zealots who counted it a religious duty to work all possible injury upon any Roman or friend of the Romans who might fall into their hands. Roman dungeons were full of Jewish rebels and Roman crosses were continually burdened with their tortured bodies. It is quite probable that Barabbas, whom the Jews preferred above Jesus that morning before Pilate's judgment seat, was a leader of Jewish sedition, one whom Roman oppression had schooled in violence, and that the two malefactors who suffered that day were members of some marauding band, perhaps Barabbas' own followers, which had openly defied Roman law. But whether this supposition be true or not, they stand as representatives of helpless, despairing men of every generation, before whose eyes Christ the Redeemer has been lifted up. The one on either side was neither worse nor better than thousands before whose vision to-day stands this tragic scene of 1900 years ago with its burdens of significance. But it is not a question of how many or how great sins these two dying men have committed. It is a question of *their attitude toward God.* These men are sinners. They have violated God's law. The penalty of the broken law confronts them. Eternity

is just before them. Reform? There is no time for that. *Reform*, that is a beautiful word, a beautiful ideal; but how can a man reform when the death chill is already creeping over him? And how can a man reform when all his associations and appetites, all his habits of thought and feeling, all the currents of his life, a mighty, irresistible tide, sweep him another way? Is there hope for the hopeless? Is there help for the helpless? That is the question of profoundest interest to humanity, and that is the question answered by this new year's vision of three crosses. If a helpless man turn toward God, if he purpose to turn away from sin, if he cry out to him who is in the midst for help, will the answer come? Yes, verily, it will. Even on the cross amid the agonies of death, if his soul in its despair cry out: "Lord remember me," the answer comes: "This day thou shalt be with me," the weak, the helpless with the strong one, Almighty to save.

Brothers, that is the lesson I read in this vision of three crosses as I stand at the opening of this new year. It tells me that even the cruel cross, instrument of human torture, may be transformed into a pinnacle from which a human soul may mount out of the very depths of despair into everlasting hope. With this vision before me I am fully persuaded that if any man will go out into this new year, and through it, a slave of sin, and out of all the years into everlasting shame,

it will be because he refuses to avail himself of offered, adequate help. And if any man will go through these months, rising from moral conquest to moral conquest to mount at last in triumph to the skies, it will be because he puts his soul into his keeping who that day "tasted death for every man."

THE GREATNESS OF LITTLE THINGS.

BY REV. N. L. BRAY,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, Portland, Mich.

Text: "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 18:1–4.

Originality has been both hated and loved through all history; for it men have been held in disfavor by the extreme conservative, and carried on the shoulders of popularity by the more radical elements of the times. The great reformers of the world have been notorious for their originality of method and statement by which they have been in conflict with the routine of contemporary life.

Such was Jesus Christ during his public ministry. What the world called great, he reduced to the minimum; what to other men seemed important, he lightly esteemed; what they held to the front, he relegated to the rear. He found the kingdoms of this world des-

N. L. BRAY.

potic, and popular sentiment held that royal birth was the best reason why a man, or even a child, should exercise despotic rule and authority over his fellows. Christ said that in his kingdom it should not be so. In this world, in Christ's time, the synonyms of littleness were childhood and servitude ; but he said, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant." And in response to the inquiry of the apostles, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them, and said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Christ was never afraid of the practical side of his own theory. So positive was he of the greatness of things commonly called little, that he himself became intimately related to that which the world calls small and inferior. The greatest man in all history, whose name has become essentially associated with the greatest civilization, whose birthday was the beginning of the days of our era, who was the author of the greatest religion, the leader of the most numerous following, the inspirer of the brightest hopes to humanity, the center of the largest system,—this man was the subject of small beginnings and unimportant surroundings

and conditions. He had choice of his own social and political relations. It was within the province of his will to assume the kingly attitude at his advent, and to appear in regal surroundings. Buddha was born in the palace of a king, and educated in the luxury of an oriental court. This put upon his system the stamp of royalty from its inception into the world. But Christ was born of a humble and unknown family, not even living within their own tribal boundaries at the time of his birth, except as they were summoned there for the purposes of taxation. Rome, the seat of all earthly greatness, or at least Jerusalem, might have been chosen as his birthplace, thus giving to himself and to his system metropolitan influence. Or he might have descended from the clouds in a chariot of fire, accompanied by a retinue of angels, and thus have removed at once all possible doubt concerning his Messiahship and divinity. But such was not his way. He came as a little child, an infant; born in the obscure little village of Bethlehem, concerning which the prophet had said, "And thou Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me who is to be ruler in Israel." And there we find him wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger—because there is no room for him elsewhere. His angelic escorts make their demonstrations and sing their carols, not at the court of Caesar, or the palace of

Herod, or before the Jewish Sanhedrin, but out over the pastures of Bethlehem's plains to the humble shepherds watching their flocks by night.

The home of his youth and early manhood, whence he is to be introduced to the world as its Redeemer, is not imperial Rome or the Jewish, princely center, but a despised village bearing a name of contempt, concerning which it was said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" In the rustic cottage, among rollicking brothers and sisters, and later at the trade of a carpenter under his foster father, he spent his time. Thus looked at from our human view-point the life and ministry of Christ, ending in his tragic death on the cross between two thieves, was the most momentous failure in all history, a "mistake and a crime without parallel;" but looked at from God's side it is the grandest scene in the history of the universe; for in it human sin was expiated, the depths of the divine love were disclosed and the path of perfection opened for the children of men. Jesus was never so completely a king as at the moment when his claims to kingship were turned into ridicule. It was in savage jest that the title was put above his cross, "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews!" Pilate uttered these words in ridicule; but when we look back at them now, do they appear ridiculous? Do they not rather shine across the centuries with inextinguishable splendor? In that hour of uttermost shame he was prov-

ing himself to be the "king of kings and lord of lords." In that hour when he was least among men he was the greatest in all the universe of God.

Note the prominence given to little things in the teachings of our Lord. When the disciples came inquiring after the greatest, Christ pitied their littleness and answered them in the language of the text. How he rebukes their folly and their ambition! Taking that which is the type of small and unimportant things, he declares it to be the greatest! What a fatal blow was this to the world's estimate of childhood! We are told that among the Greeks and Romans only boys were of importance in the eyes of parents; and they were cherished merely for what they might some day become in the military forces of their country. "Children, according to pagan thought, were only machines for fighting future battles." We sing the sweet hymn:

> "I think when I read that sweet story of old,
> When Jesus was here among men,
> How he called little children as lambs to his fold,
> I should like to have been with him then."

But the age in which Christ lived was most unfavorable to childlife and development. Christ himself was chased away from home by the cruel edict of the king. Even the disciples of our Lord bade the mothers not to trouble the Master with their children. But amid all this disparagement of littleness and

weakness, this contempt for childhood and children, is heard the solitary voice of Jesus Christ, raised in gentle but firm rebuke in the words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Christ saw in childhood the prophecy of all possible greatness. The wreckage of humanity along the shores of time are the wasted or neglected possibilities of childhood; while those that have escaped the perils of the voyage and have reached the port in safety have utilized all the latent powers of infancy. "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." When the disciples inquired further for the secret of great power, and the mother came with two of them asking that they might sit one on his right and the other on his left, Christ said unto them, "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." Greatness is a growth, a development, and not a gift.

The vanity of the disciples was seen in the report of their trial trip among the cities of Judah. They were so elated over their success that they exultingly exclaimed, "Even the devils are subject unto us." But Christ replied, "Rejoice not that the devils are subject unto you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven"—that you were so mercifully

recognized as to have a name among the people of God. The name written in heaven was an evidence of true character, but a reputation for great achievements might not mean anything of real value. The apostles were as unreliable as other people until they had learned this lesson. They rose occasionally to the importance of supreme opportunities; they cast out devils, healed the sick, walked on the sea; at other times the devils resisted, disease mocked and the waters sank beneath their feet. They performed some acts truly great; but so many of their deeds were a discredit to their calling that Jesus rebuked them often for their little faith, their lack of love, their want of knowledge and understanding. The disciples seemed always anxious concerning great deeds and great honors; Jesus could stop his work to bless a little child or stoop to wash the feet of his followers. They used costly remedies, he used clay; they talked of the great temple, he talked of one stone upon another,—the building material; they were ambitious for the chief place, he taught them the lowly pathway of Christian duty, ministering to the wants of the least of his brethren. Christ seems to have taken delight in all things esteemed little by the world,—widows' mites, little sparrows, grains of mustard seed, hairs of the head, the cup of cold water, little loaves. Very slow were these disciples to learn the lesson that small people could wear princely robes, write great names,

assume great titles, occupy chief seats, and be identified with great honors, and yet never be great themselves or increase the value of their official place. They came, very gradually, to understand that the importance of life is in what we *are* and in what we *do*; that service is the all-important element in life, whether it be washing feet or wearing a crown and holding a scepter; and that an essential factor in every life is that which contributes in any degree to the value and efficiency of individual character. The Pharisees regarded the tithing of mint and anise, the wearing of phylacteries, the keeping of days and the making of appearances as the fundamental duties of life; Christ, however, names justice and mercy as the weightier matters of the law. They were careful to avoid great sins, murder and adultery; but he warned them against lecherous looks, and base desires, and feelings of hate and revenge. He taught them that by the trifles of thinking and feeling and looking all great character is built. In the Sermon on the Mount we are shown the building material for character: purity, meekness, righteousness, mercy, peace-making, fidelity.

In the third place, we are admonished in our text that in the practical life of every Christian, attention must be paid to little things. We have noticed how Christ looked after elementaries. He was very careful that they should be right. It is an interesting fact

that when God made this world he did not roll it out on general principles, a whole globe at once ; but he first prepared the sixty-five or more elementary substances, not in the mass, but in the atom. He shaped the atom so small that no eye ever saw it ; then he endowed the atom with certain affinities, or molecular forces, and with the atoms he built the molecules, and with the molecules he formed the masses—the continents and seas. That was God's method with the physical kingdom. When he makes a tree or an animal he uses the same method ; through the pores and capillaries of plants and the digestion of animals the building material reaches its appropriate place.

So in the realm of grace, Christ shows his supreme interest in the principles of correct living ; he was never so careful about the masses as about the elements. The nature of the building is determined by the character of the building material. Spiritual birth is the very first condition necessary ; hence the declaration of the text, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." To Nicodemus he said, "Ye must be born again." The first element of true greatness is the germ of divine life ; there is no character worthy of God's recognition that is not thus begun, and whoever is thus endowed, though but a babe in development, is great to that extent. From this point, the new birth, true greatness is attained. Yet

how slow the growth, made only by the patient industry of a life ever devoted to the little every day duties that come to hand! This development is not the work of any limited period. As it pertains to the *highest nature* of man, it is necessarily the *slowest* growth. It requires twenty-five years to mature a human body, and seventy-five years to build a great intellect; but it will take an eternity to finish the greatness of a regenerated soul. Some people imagine that they can be made great by a spiritual *baptism* at an altar service, or by some wonderful experience in prayer and consecration. But we must not forget that baptism, whether by water or by the spirit, is not designed to make us great, but to purify and put us under better conditions for Christian development. Greatness of character is attained by constant growth; and the growth is the result of the thinking, speaking and doing of little things. Every thought, every word, every act of our lives helps to form our moral and religious characters. These thoughts and words and deeds may be so little as to be called trifles by the world; yet if they are right and pure and godly they add a trifle to our better natures, and we are the better, the purer, the more God-like for them. On the other hand, every little sin will detract from our character. It is no uncommon thing to hear the remark, "That's only a little sin; don't make mountains out of mole-hills." Such a suggestion is from the

enemy; this is his vantage ground. Have you ever stopped to think that a man may continue to commit "mole-hill" sins until he has built a mountain so large that it hides from him the light of God's reconciled countenance and casts about him the darkness of condemnation and guilt. It is life's trifles that work into character to make one either more godly or more devilish, more beautiful in holiness or more deformed in sin. So much hinges upon trifles. It required but one jot to change the name of Abraham's wife from Sarai, my princess, to Sarah, *the* princess—to expand the significance of her name from the wife of a solitary man to the royal mother of nations. The great controversy between Arius and Athenasius hung upon a solitary iota, a single letter in a word. Some one has reminded us of the fact that "it was just the little word 'no' from the lips of Luther that bore within it the liberties of the world."

Can we afford to ignore the importance of these little things? Oh, that Christian people might realize the necessity of constant watchfulness over life's trifles! Because the sum of these constitute what we are to be in time and eternity.

To be great in God's sight is to care for the little ones, to visit the fatherless and the widow, to bear the cup of cold water. Such greatness is attained by breathing the spirit of prayer—a breath at a time—by cherishing a holy thought, by exchanging a kind

word, a loving look, a winning smile, and by encouraging holy desires ; by going about doing good. Such is practical Christianity : our Epworth Leaguers who with smiles and bouquets put light and fragrance into the sick room, who care for the poor and the destitute ; the Sabbath school teacher, who by much prayer and study brings to the class each week something fresh from the word of God, and faithfully ministers to the wants of each scholar ; the church member who conscientiously sustains the social devotional services of the church, and by song and prayer and testimony encourages others and develops spiritual life within himself ; all these are winning the Master's commendation, " Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, enter thou into the joy of the Lord." In this way "a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation."

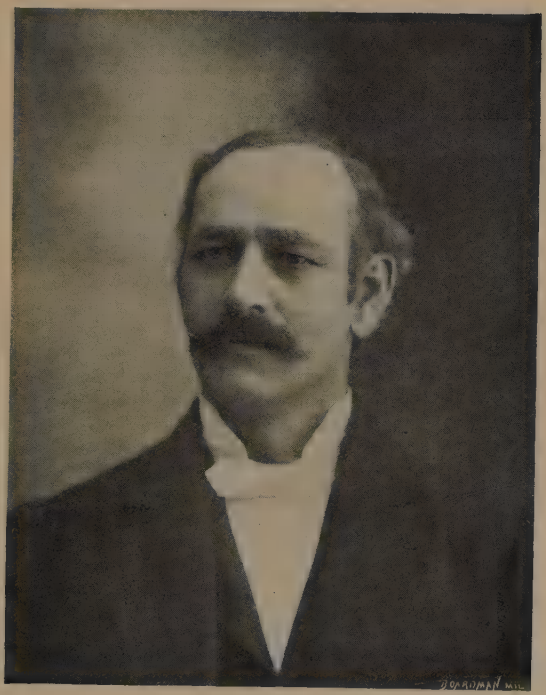
CHRISTIAN HEROISM AND ITS RESULTS.

BY REV. R. A. WRIGHT,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, Mt. Pleasant, Mich.

Text: "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." Acts 4:13.

For a few centuries continental Europe and England supported and enjoyed that body of horsemen called knights. Every castle formed a valuable and powerful part of some kingdom, and the lord of each castle kept in perpetual readiness a band of knights who could rush forth singly, or in pairs or groups to abate some wrong which was weighing upon some person or state. So valuable had become their services that they were noted for their bravery and chivalry. It was the highest ambition of a youth to distinguish himself by some act of bravery and then kneel at the feet of the commander and receive knighthood. Poets wrote of their deeds of bravery and bards sang their praises. These knights have long since passed away, but the spirit of Christian heroism



R. A. WRIGHT.

is still with us, inspiring thousands to deeds of self-sacrifice and philanthropy.

The narrative concerning the arrest of Peter and John given in the fourth chapter of Acts is a very suggestive one. It teaches us that men filled with the Christ spirit will possess heroic natures and impress their own noble qualities upon others. Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer. A lame man had been carried to a seat at the gate called "Beautiful" that he might ask alms from the people passing into the temple, "who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms." No doubt the disciples looked upon him with hearts full of the love and teaching of their Master, whom they had so often seen helping the needy. They called the man's attention as soon as he had fastened his eyes upon them. "Peter said, silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered the temple walking and praising God. And all the people were filled with wonder and amazement." Peter followed this act of kindness with an exhortation to the people, telling them that it was through the power of Christ whom they had crucified that this man was healed. The miracle and

the exhortation made such a stir that Peter and John were arrested and put in ward. The next day they were brought before the rulers and elders. Peter's defense was so manly that his accusers were confounded, and the judges "marveled and took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

I. *Fellowship with Christ makes men moral heroes.* It makes the weak strong, the timid courageous. The world has admired and even deified the human, earthward side of greatness, and overlooked the spiritual, Godward side. Men have exalted power, wealth and intellectual superiority above character or moral greatness, founded in faith, purity and trust in God. The epithet "Great" was put to the name of Alexander, to Frederick of Prussia, Napoleon Bonaparte and others whom the world calls heroes. Well, in some respects they were greater than their fellows, stronger than their associates. But a truer standard is now used by which human achievements are measured. Since the religion of Jesus Christ has prevailed, men are beginning to put *character* in the light of his matchless excellence. We may admire the genius of those men, but when we think of their selfishness, political ambitions and cruelties, how insignificant they seem compared with the spirit and teachings of the Master! Peter and John had been touched by a great heart and had partaken of his matchless spirit. We partake of the spirit of our

companions, those with whom we associate help to mold our character. The person who is constantly in the society of artists will catch something of their spirit. If we mingle with statesmen and listen to their conversation and debates, it is certainly going to have its influence upon our lives. If our companions are unkind and thoughtless their society will be detrimental to us. Too often companionships are not formed because of any real liking we have for the people, but our habits cause us to mingle in their society and go to the places they frequent, and in course of time we find ourselves influenced by them. The man who has formed the habits of drinking and card playing, even though in his better moments he may despise those with whom he mingles, will soon begin to seek their society in preference to others. The same law holds in the choice of good. The timid, shrinking soul will be greatly helped by associating with the courageous. The man of impure thought and speech will be ashamed of his vulgarity in the presence of virtue, and if he continues in its company, will be greatly helped. We are so constituted that circumstances and environment have much to do in determining what we shall do and what we shall be. A distinguished lawyer said to a young man leaving his home to learn a trade, " Select those companions who will be a help to you in building character." The disciples were courageous in declaring the truth, because

they had been with Jesus and learned of him ; had partaken of his brave, noble spirit. Many a man, after he has forsaken sin and sinful companions and has been filled with the Christ spirit, has shown evidence of heroic qualities. What battles he has to fight ! The old habits and passions will confront him ; often the way will be rough ; his motives will be misunderstood and his uprightness questioned, but if he is true to the inner voice of duty, and maintains the Christ spirit, soon his critics will become his admirers and friends. The world may seem slow to give a man his place, but when it finds that he is willing to dare and do for principle, it will honor him for it. Peter and John had gained a moral victory over their enemies. They had honored their Master and were honored in return for their integrity and boldness in declaring the truth. They may not have had many advantages before they became followers of Christ, but after three years of teaching and companionship they were no longer ignorant. They had one of the ablest teachers the world has ever known ; a teacher that could say to wind and sea, " Peace, be still, and there was a great calm." You might take an ordinary man, with good common sense, and for three years let him come under the influence and be instructed by a man with great personal magnetism and ability, and at the end of that time you would not think of calling him ignorant. Companionship with such a

strong character would be an education in itself.

II. *Christ gives courage by revealing the highest possibilities of our nature.* There are new worlds for us to discover; hidden powers to be utilized; treasures in the soul, waiting to be discovered and used. There is gold in the rocks, and there are pearls in the sea, but men must dig in the earth and crush the rocks to find the gold, go down into the depths of the sea to find the pearls. Often the heart has to be broken and softened to find soul treasures. Conversion will open to you new fields of thought and bring to light hidden treasures that will surprise and charm you by their beauty and richness. The world had no idea of the hidden power and courage there was in John Bunyan until Christ spoke peace to his sinful soul and filled it with new life, which made him a moral giant. While confined in Bedford jail for telling the story of the cross, he wrote that master allegory, "Pilgrim's Progress," which has helped many a struggling soul through the Slough of Despond and safely past Doubting Castle. Little did Bunyan dream of the hidden wealth there was in his soul while he was living in sin.

Scientists estimate that there is enough energy in fifty acres of sunshine to run all the machinery in the world, if it could be concentrated, but the sun might blaze out upon the earth forever without setting anything on fire, although the rays focused by a single

glass would melt solid granite, or change even a diamond into vapor. Fellowship with Christ will bring out and concentrate our hidden powers. Rev. Louis Albert Banks, during his pastorate in one of the churches in Boston, preached a sermon on "The Christian Horizon," showing how Christianity enlarges the intellectual horizon and awakens men to the grand possibilities of human thought. He said that one of the most brilliant thinkers of this century, one who has made himself an honorable name throughout the civilized world by his power of sustained and lofty thinking, says of himself that twenty-five years ago he was driving a hack without any conception that he had a head worth using, but he was converted to Christ, and spiritual regeneration proved to be a regeneration of mind as well.

Some eight years ago I preached to a congregation in a country church in Illinois, in which there were eight young ladies teaching school, one young man studying law, and two others medicine. A short time previous to my pastorate these young people had no ambition to teach or study law or medicine, but during a series of special meetings held in the neighborhood many had been converted to Christ, among others these young men and women. Not only were the hearts changed, but their ambition was aroused to be somebody and to do something to help themselves and others.

Christianity pays financially and socially as well as spiritually. Oh, that thousands more of our young people might come to Christ for light and have those hidden treasures brought to light and used for the uplifting of humanity! The gospel sets before every young man and woman in this congregation an open door, and if you enter it will lead you to honor and usefulness.

III. *Christ gives courage by demanding the surrender of self.* A half-hearted service will never produce great results. If we would have power we must be willing to pay the price. The moral giants of the past have been those who were whole-hearted in their service. Peter and John had tarried in the "upper room" for the promised blessing. It was the Pentecostal blessing that gave them courage to declare the truth of Christ's resurrection, and that through his power the lame man was able to walk. Every man who has attained success, every hero, every prominent actor on the world's stage, every character whose life marks an epoch in the history of nations, every reformer either in church or in State who has been instrumental in pulling down the thrones of tyranny, owes the accomplishment of his desires to a whole-hearted service. As a rule, what the heart longs for the head and the hands may attain. The currents of knowledge, wealth and success are as fixed as the tides of the sea. If we succeed in spiritual

things, we must be like the "man who found treasure hid in a field, and sold all that he had and bought that field," or like the merchant seeking goodly pearls, "who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all he had and bought it." There must be a complete giving up of the old sins and habits, and a taking on of the new life. Joshua-like, we must willingly and gladly say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." In business and in the professions, half-hearted service insures failure. There must be a coming out, a choosing of what we shall do, and then diligence on our part to make it pay. Such a coming out and such a choosing on the part of Christians always produces great results, and people will say of such, even as the elders and people said of Peter and John, "They have been with Jesus."

"Not your own! To him you owe
All your life and all your love:
Live, that you his praise may show,
Who is yet all praise above.
Every day and every hour,
Every gift and every power,
Consecrate to him alone
Who hath claimed you for his own."

IV. *Christian heroism produces great results.* In the home. Nothing has done so much for the purifying and elevating of the home as the Christ spirit. Thousands can testify to the fact that Christianity has brightened and sweetened the home life.

It has united parents and children in a bond of love that can never be broken. There are many here to-night who look back to the home life and the family devotions, and associate with them the most pleasant memories of childhood; and the thoughts of that home and family circle have kept you in many a trying hour. Often, when perplexed and discouraged, you have thought of the patience and devotion of those Christian parents who, under similar circumstances, found strength and comfort in their closet or at the family altar. Dr. Talmage said in a sermon in Brooklyn, "The Christian hearth-stone is the only corner-stone for a republic." The virtues cultivated in the family circle are an absolute necessity for the state. If there be not enough of moral principle to make the family adhere, there will not be enough political principle to make the state adhere. The same storm that upsets the ship in which the family sails will sink the frigate of the constitution. Jails, penitentiaries, armies and navies are not our best defense. The home is the best fortress. Many a wife, brother and sister, by their self-sacrificing spirit and Christian bravery are the stay of the home. Like the leaven hid in the meal until it leavened the whole, so the spirit of Christ in the heart is leavening the home and society. I might, too, speak of the influence of this spirit in state and national affairs, how it is purifying politics. Many, to-day, by their Christian boldness

in reproving sin in high places, are bringing about wonderful results, and the world will be better just in proportion as this spirit of the Master is taught and practiced by the people.

Heroic spirits there are in all walks of life, on the farm, in the workshop, counting house, factory, and in all the professions. Do not think that popularity and conspicuous service is necessary for the manifestation of heroic qualities. "Only now and then is a gold vein found and brought to light, but the mountains are full of gold veins. Only now and then is a pearl found, but there are myriads of pearls hidden in oysters beneath the waters of the sea." And there are many lives obscured by exteriors as homely as the oyster's, and when God makes up his jewels not one of them will be left out. Do not say, nobody will know it if I am self-sacrificing and heroic. Yes, somebody will know it. One will know it whose touch is immortality, whose love is better than ownership of the round world, and who has in reserve for you a life higher than that of the body, nobler than that of the flesh.

W. H. B. URCH.

M. E. CHURCH, IONIA, MICH.

CHRIST ABIDING.

BY REV. W. H. B. URCH,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, Ionia, Mich.

Text: "But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them." Luke 24:29.

The text was a prayer; importune, passionate, pleading, that came from the depths of souls stirred to the keenest sense of need. When the heart is oppressed with the urgency of a great sorrow it cannot wait to formulate elaborate petitions, indeed it may not be able to find even words to express itself; but a cry, an ejaculation, a sigh, a movement of the soul toward God is sufficient, for he is a wonderful interpreter. The Pharisee expressed himself in fair phrases, yet his prayer did not reach the ear of God; while the cry of the conscience-smitten Publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," brought an immediate response and he went to his house justified. It is not the length or symmetry of our prayers, but the heart-longing that impels them, which will give us access to the throne of the heavenly grace.

The two disciples in this sad walk to Emmaus must, we think, have discovered in the sympathetic stranger their Lord Christ even before his formal disclosure of himself, and we can enter into their feeling as we hear them plead, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening." We are this evening to consider this prayer as a confession of need. Never in their lives was there a stronger need of the vivifying presence of their Lord. Look at the circumstance. For some time these men had been his disciples, living probably in the closest intimacy with him; he had permitted them to enter into his purpose for the redemption of the world; they had been allowed to share his griefs and joys; with them he often withdrew from the strife and clamor of life into the solitary places; and, too, they had shared his splendid triumphs, were nearest to him when the charmed multitude thronged him. They had felt the glorious inspiration which his personal presence gave, it had been strength to their weariness and support in every time of need. They had been in his confidence respecting his plans for the new kingdom, were just beginning better to understand him, although they had thus far but dimly comprehended his vast purposes, his far reaching mission. They had gone with him on that fateful night to Gethsemane, where amid the shadows, the torches of the pursuers had revealed the Master for the traitorous kiss of the apostate Judas

and the shameful arrest. So long as he was with them in daily contact they maintained their confidence, but at last that visible, tangible presence is removed, and having failed fully to apprehend his spiritual teaching his removal throws them into confusion and even despair. His tragic death with all its accompanying horror and ignominy eclipses, for the moment, their faith. This is clearly shown in their conversation on the way to Emmaus. Ah, it is easy with the glory of nineteen centuries of Christianity behind us lightly to censure these bewildered men ; it is not possible to enter thoroughly into their feelings at this awful time. Oh, how high had been their hopes, how their lofty aspiration had been quenched, their plans for the new kingdom, which lay so near to their hearts, seem to have collapsed ! Their leader, director, friend and brother was dead, and so thoroughly did they believe him to be irrevocably gone that they gave no credence to the report of the faithful women who related that angels had told them of the Master's rising from the dead.

While they were thus sadly communing, a stranger of gracious mien joined himself to them with the inquiry, "What communications are these that ye have one to another and are sad ?" "What things," Cleopas echoes wonderingly ; "it is passing strange that this stranger can know nothing of that which has so mightily stirred all Jerusalem." Then they give him

the story of his own arrest, the indecent proceedings in Pilate's hall and before Herod's bar, the disposal of the prisoner to scourging, thence to the cross of cruel agony; in awe-struck tones they may have described the gloom of Golgotha, the pall of darkness that for a time shrouded the sufferings of the prisoner; they doubtless told him of the burial, the sealing of the tomb with the Roman signet, the guard of soldiers to watch the sepulchre, the hatred of the Jews who now so brutally triumphed. In this sad recital they revealed their hopelessness in the pathetic words, "And we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Observe that their own sense of personal loss is subordinated to what appears to them the irreparable loss to the kingdom. "What can we do now—all is lost." It is said that the dawn is preceded by the darkest hour, so, upon the night of their profoundest misery the glad light of a new day of hope was soon to break upon their souls. The gracious Lord now fully reinforces their fainting spirits, dealing with them so gently. "O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe—to apprehend. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." What wondrous words, what transcendent delight in this communing! He who in the days of his flesh spake as never man

spake, unfolds the mysteries of God's grace. The darkness falls away; they forgot their sorrow in the new joy; the old hope returns; already he is in a higher and more beautiful sense entering into their hearts to abide with them, never again to be driven forth by doubting; a sweet awe falls upon their souls and we do not wonder that as they returned with renewed lives to Jerusalem they would say to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked with us by the way?"

We perceive how they needed the divine abiding; the personal Christ had for the moment faded from their lives. He whom they had known so well, with whom they had walked and conversed in loving fellowship, was dead to them, and desolation filled their hearts. They had hoped for so much; with the Master at their side great things might have been accomplished and redemption brought to poor, oppressed Israel. But they were to learn that Christ was not dead; death must not be associated with that dear name; the temporary occupancy of Joseph's tomb was to enhance the coming triumph, the momentary obscuration was to contribute to the bright glory to follow. "These things" that had come to pass were necessary. Christ must enter into his glory in the widest sense. "These things" made it possible for our Lord to abide with men to all generations—no more in a local or restricted sense as he was mani-

fested in Palestine, but throughout the world, in every land, in every city, in every heart. This spiritual revelation of Christ was their deep need; they were to learn that his bodily presence was not necessary to their joy; that in the coming years of service the Master would become more and more real. They were to comprehend the splendid promise given as he was about to pass from mortal sight, "Lo, I am with you alway."

We have been studying the experience of men who lived nearly two thousand years ago, but is it not repeated in every generation? Life may be lived under different conditions, but the experience of the soul has been much the same throughout all time. Here is one who has known the joys of salvation, has heard the Master's voice, has felt the thrill that the touch of his hand brings to the heart, and experienced the sweet blessedness of fellowship and communion. Like the disciples of old he knew his Lord so well as to enter into his purposes for the salvation of the world. There was no possible doubt that he indeed walked with him. Then suddenly a dark cloud overshadowed him, obscuring his vision, shutting out his Master. All at once he seemed to be left alone. In the pain and bewilderment he begins to lose faith in the Christ. The Evil One suggests to the fainting heart that the happy days of the past were all hallu-

cination. The world assumes the aspect of a vast wilderness upon which the storm has broken with a wild fury. In that lonely season the tempter whispers, "Where is your Christ? You thought he was a reality in your experience and a joy and comfort to the world; do you not see that the past years of apparent trust were a delusion? You are clinging to a dead Christ who cannot hear when you call, who will not regard when you appeal to him with strong and bitter cry." You were then tempted to exclaim, "I suppose it is true; I look into the heavens, but they are as brass. I call, but no answer breaks the silence." In the bitterness which is worse than death you exclaim, "I cannot find him. He is dead to me, and oh, I had trusted he was to bring to me redemption!" Words are inadequate to describe the experience of those in whose lives Christ seems to have died. I shall never forget the misery of a young Christian mother, who in an epidemic of diphtheria lost her two beautiful children. Despair seized upon her and she herself was smitten with the disease. She did not want to recover, for she seemed to be prostrate in the ruins of life. The consolation of the church and religion was for a time unavailing, and I saw there was no hope but in the resurrection of Christ in her soul. The sorrow at last became unbearable and in her extremity she cried, "O Lord, if thou come not to me I shall die." And he revealed

himself with strength and healing to the bruised spirit. In her heart-sickness she had said, "My God in whom I trusted could not have done this, there is no helper, no savior." With the Christ restored she learned to say, "Though he slay me yet will I trust him."

We notice further the importunity of the disciples. The text says they constrained him. "Abide with us for it is toward evening." The delightful converse had disclosed to them more than ever their pressing need. Some may read in this only the pressing hospitality common in the East. I cannot but think there was more than this; that in their inmost souls there was a hope that it was indeed the Lord who had chased the sadness away and dispelled the gloom. So they said, "We cannot part from him; his company is so delightful we would have him abide with us." And when he made as if he would have gone further they put forth constraining hands and cried, "Leave us not, seest thou not that the sun is ready to sink behind the horizon, the day is far spent, night is almost here. Thou couldst not get much farther on the road, be content, tarry with us to-night and break bread." How glad the Savior must have been at such urgency! And he went in to tarry with them. He comes not to indifferent souls; he can be nothing to him who longs not for his presence. Do our hearts to-day constrain us to say,

" Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without thee I cannot live;
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without thee I dare not die?"

Surely there are many in the social circle, in the busy paths of commerce, in the haunts of pleasure, that are feeling below the surface of their lives the need of Christ; that have known heart-hunger and soul-thirst which can be satisfied only by the abiding of Jesus Christ. But Jesus must not be treated as you would treat the fashionable friend who comes to the home in response to a formal invitation couched in polite language. If he is to dwell with us, we must pour forth the whole soul in earnest entreaty. I cannot do without thee, the heart is desolate, the life dreary and waste. "Give me liberty or give me death," cried the hero of the old senate chamber a century ago. I would have you cry, "Give me Christ or I die." When we thus desire him he will come.

The reason for urgency is given. The night is at hand. This plea is better understood by those who have lived in tropic lands where the night falls suddenly. With little varying regularity the sun every night sinks below the horizon, and in a few minutes darkness enshrouds us; no gentle decline of day, no soft twilight; night seems to leap forth upon the day apparently without warning. How suddenly the night often comes to us! How old art thou, bright, eager,

happy youth? You reply that you have not seen a fourth of the allotted span of life, and that stretching out before you is a long life of promise. But let me remind you that the sun of life is often eclipsed before it reaches the meridian. At mid-day, or even early morning, it becomes night. The sun of the flaming Summerfield, who stirred America with his matchless eloquence, went down at twenty-seven. Alexander of Macedon finished his work at thirty-five, and the unhappy misanthrope, Byron, sank into a foreign grave at the early age of thirty-six. How old art thou, my hale, hearty friend? "Only fifty, and I expect many years are yet mine." Be not too confident, for it may be that even to-day the lengthening shadows of sunset may be casting themselves across thy pathway. And what is thine age, trembling old man? "Three score years and ten?" Then it has indeed become evening and the day is well nigh spent. Well might thy prayer be—and God will hear the quavering, broken tones—"O Lord, abide with me."

The prayer was heard and he went in to tarry with them. They sit at meat together and in the breaking of bread he is fully unveiled to them and then vanishes from their sight. If we love God we can in a measure, at least, understand the felicity of that fellowship, the joy of that communion, the holy delight of looking into the blessed face of him whom they had mourned as dead and who was now alive

forevermore. The last doubt had fled. They could not remain at the inn, but set out immediately for the city, eager to confirm the glad tidings that the Lord was risen, for had he not appeared to them? And what a change in these two men the presence of the Master had made! Only a few hours before they had left their homes broken-hearted and desolate, with saddened and hopeless souls mourning over their dead Lord and the ruin of their hopes. Now they return with joy irradiating their faces, the glow of a new confidence in their hearts, and rejoicing in a clear understanding of the awful mystery of the past few days. How they would recall every word of that marvelous conversation and dwell upon the delight which came to their souls! "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

The supreme need of the world to-day is Christ. Is there not reason to fear that the church does not know him well enough? Think for a moment what he might be to us if only we desired him, how our own personal experience would brighten and our power with men increase. To the disciples this revelation was not to be a more selfish enjoyment, but a new force in their lives which should make them a power as witnesses for the Master. I need Christ in all my life. I need him in childhood's sweet days to care for me as a mother cares for her child; then

when the crystal gates of childhood close upon me, and I pass through the golden portals of youth and look out with wondering eyes upon what appears to be a long, happy vista of life, seeing in anticipation its joys and testing its pleasures, then I, more than ever, need the gentle care of him who has promised to be the guide of my youth and to preserve my inexperienced feet from evil on every side. Yes, and when I have fully entered the arena of life and feel its throbbing all about me, understanding more of its dread mystery, pushed out into the midst of its woes and sinfulness, I may be tempted to exclaim, "Can God be in this turmoil and strife!" I will trust him. And when the hour of fierce conflict comes, and sharp temptation tries me with its fire which shall either purify or destroy the soul, my sorely tried spirit shall cry unto him whose powerful presence will save me,

> "I need thy presence every passing hour;
> What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
> Who like thyself my guide and stay can be
> Through cloud and sunshine? Oh, abide with me!"

And when the dark hours come and days when, by reason of personal affliction or bereavement, the heavens seem like brass above me, when the day becomes night, I will sing,

> "I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
> Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness."

Yea, and when not a single fleck of dark cloud touches the blue dome of the sky, and the sun shines uninterruptedly, and everything I do seems to prosper, my prayer still shall be, "O Lord, abide with me." Then cometh that inexpressibly solemn hour when that experience which men call death ushers the soul into the realities of the eternal life beyond the mists of earth, I shall be able to say,

> "Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day,
> Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away,
> Change and decay in all around I see,
> Oh, thou who changest not, abide with me."

"Light the lamp, wife," feebly murmured the dying man, "it is growing dark." But the lamp was already lighted and burning with a steady radiance, but he saw it not. He no longer perceived face of wife or children, for he was fast hastening to that country in which John tells us the inhabitants need no candle, for the Lord is the light thereof; the valley of the shadow of death had dimmed his vision of earthly things. Suddenly he exclaimed, "Light, oh, so light!" Ah, he no longer needs your lamp, for he looks now upon the King in his beauty, in the land that is afar off. The gates of the eternal city have swung wide open, and the effulgent glory from the throne streamed down upon him even before the weary spirit trod the pavement of gold.

"Reveal thyself before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me."

LUTHER E. LOVEJOY.

THE STORY OF A GARDEN—A NEW YEAR'S PARABLE.

BY REV. LUTHER E. LOVEJOY,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, Ludington, Mich.

Text: "I am come into my garden." Song of Solomon, 5:1.

The old year has come and gone, carrying with it into the past its record of achievements and of unimproved opportunities. We cannot recall it, and we would not if we could. To-day a new year opens upon us and it seems to turn toward us with benevolent face and beckoning hand, saying, "Come, accept me in place of the old. I offer you new possibilities, bright prospects. By my aid you may outdo all former achievements, retrieving past mistakes and redeeming the time. Follow me." We have no choice but to go, for the new year will be either guide or task-master. Upon us rests the responsibility to determine what the results shall be. The Great Husbandman has assigned us a fresh field for cultivation, and my wish to-day is that we may so examine this field at the beginning and so judiciously plan its

tillage that from it, continually, the Master may be gathering much good fruit.

Last spring, in the spacious plot behind the parsonage, my wife and I planted a garden. It was our first experience in garden-making and we watched it with great interest, absorbing readily its lessons. Our neighbors pronounced it a very successful garden, too, remarkably so for persons of our profession. All through the summer it made healthful and appetizing contributions to our table, and provided not a few dainty gifts for friendship and charity. But we made mistakes, too, and gained needed experience, so that if we shall plant again the coming year we shall be able to cultivate more wisely and make our garden a source of greater profit. Not the least among the benefits we received from our garden were those lessons it taught us of the spiritual life. For God means that in nature we are to see the similes of his grace. I shall mention some of the truths our gardening taught us, hoping that we may learn such lessons as may make our coming year more perfect and more fruitful, rendering impossible in the future the blunders and failures of the past.

1. The first thing we discovered was that for the safety of our garden it would be necessary to inclose it with a fence. On the north it was bounded by a public alley, and on the west and south it opened toward a street, so that for years it had been a thor-

oughfare for men and beasts. And so all along the alley side we stretched a wire fence, knowing that however carefully good seed might be sown, and young plants watched and watered, before the summer should close the tramping of thoughtless or mischievous feet would undo all our labor.

It is precisely this discovery which many of us need to make regarding our religious lives. Jesus, who calls us to enter his service, has seen fit that it be performed in the presence of the world and amid its busy activities. In his prayer to the Father he says, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." It is in the world that the strength and beauty of the spiritual life are to exert their saving influence. It is by holy living in the face of a frivolous and gainsaying world that the gospel is most powerfully to be preached. It was not so much what Peter and the apostles said in Jerusalem, as the evidence that "they had been with Jesus," which led the multitude to wonder and believe. And yet the Christian life which has no hidden place "under the shadow of the Almighty," no closet into which it can enter and shut its door, no precious, mysterious thoughts into which not even its best friend may enter, has not yet learned where lies the spring which feeds the currents of the holy life. In this hurrying age we have forgotten the priceless value of spiritual concentration, of that se-

clusion absolutely necessary to growth in grace. The twilight hour of holy meditation, "when the mind has ceased its tension" and "the soul comes forth to do its work," is brushed aside to make room for the more extended plans of commerce or ambition. And the hour of secret prayer is condensed and compressed until there is hardly space left for the wings of faith to lift themselves and stretch toward God. The garden of our religious life is laid wide open to the traffic-street of the world, and every worldly interest and every vandal friend is invited to run in and over our life, making a thoroughfare of our heart, and trampling down and destroying the best that has arisen within us. Until by an unyielding purpose we shall have determined that our inmost lives shall be our own, we have decreed, by neglect, that they shall be half devoted to destruction. And so as we enter upon another year let me recommend that we consecrate a portion of every day and of every week to the uninterrupted culture of the spiritual life; fencing in some portion to be held sacred to ourselves and God; a place where we may think, and pray, and look within, and look above, and come to know the heavenly Father.

2. The second thing we learned was that our garden needed stimulation. The soil was principally made up of light yellow sand which sometime had drifted over from the beach of Lake Michigan, and

unless it could be fertilized our garden could be expected to produce only feeble and sickly plants. Our neighbors who had had experience in gardening told us that the best reinforcement for such a soil is wood ashes, and so we gathered up the winter's product of the church furnace and spread it over the surface of our garden, thus making the wreck and refuse of the past a stimulus to the fruitfulness of the future. Just this lesson we need to apply to our spiritual lives this New Year's day. As we look back over the past year we are astonished to see how little we accomplished. And as we recall the blunders and broken vows, the failures and the follies, the sins of commission, and the shame of neglect, our hearts sink within us, and we say to ourselves, "What a year of shame and failure this has been!" It is often profitable for the Christian to stop and take an honest view of his real position, not excusing or palliating or explaining, but holding himself to the same rigid standard which he sets for his neighbor, and which the gospel sets for him. Oh, how little our righteousness appears when we hold it up beside the righteousness of the Master! How insignificant our sacrifices when we remember what we might have done. But as we bow our heads in shame in the presence of the Holy One we begin to realize how great are his goodness and mercy, and we say, "Lord help me, I will try to make my future better than the past, and better because of the past,"

and thus sprinkling upon our faulty lives the ashes of past failure, we find ourselves stimulated to holier endeavor for the future.

But we found that it is possible to over-fertilize. All through the winter the furnace ashes had been thrown in a great pile in the middle of the garden. And we said to ourselves, "Here we shall have vigorous growth if nowhere else." But just the contrary resulted. Right in the best part of our garden the fertilization was so strong that nearly all the plant life was destroyed, and the few plants that grew were yellow and stunted and worthless. Too much of the ashes of a dead past will ruin the spiritual life. Many a noble soul has blasted its future by dwelling upon the failures of yesterday, and continually gazing inward at the imperfections of the heart. We need the stimulation of the past and the corrective influence of self-examination, but we need only so much as to make us cry out from the heart, with St. Paul, "I will forget the things behind. I will press forward to the mark for the prize."

3. One of the most essential things in gardening is general cultivation. Before the planting begins the ground must be broken up and the soil loosened and exposed to light and air. And so we had our garden carefully spaded and raked. Now, some of our lives need breaking up—a complete overturning, or the garden of the future will bear no fruit. They have

become hardened and self-centered and spiritually barren. Our backslidings have gone on unconsciously until we are far away from God, and perhaps do not know it. Devotion, and simplicity, and sacrifice have become irksome to us. We love ourselves and our ease. Some of us have become hardened toward our brother. We have forgotten our neighbor's needs and have cared less for his soul than for the growth of our church. We have forgotten the sad hearts and homes in our city, the perils which beset our neighbor's sons and daughters, the tears and groans of the impoverished, and the discouraged, and the downtrodden, and the abandoned. The broken hearts that needed a comforter we have neglected. We have thanked God that we were not as other men, or even as these poor publicans. Oh, what must he say who went about doing good, when he sees how little time and thought we spend on these, his brethren? Some of us have become hardened in our generosity. The ceaseless wail of a heathen world and the entreaties of a needy church, lurching and plunging and almost foundered with its over-freight of debt, have broken upon our deafened ears in vain. And some of us are hardened enough to enjoy hearing God's people rebuked to-day, and yet have forgotten our own obligation to God. More than a year ago we knew we ought to cease from sin and begin the service of Christ, and yet we have lived the whole

year in utter indifference to him, breathing his pure air, drinking from the crystal waters of yonder lake, eating of his bounteous harvests, enjoying a Christian civilization, living in a godly home, knowing full well that Jesus died for us and yearns for us, yet in our selfishness making no move to honor him. O God! what will be our judgment in the last great day? Will it not be that in our selfish indifference we have neglected and treated with contempt the Son of God, who gave himself for us? If at the judgment the accusing angel should charge us with theft we might plead, "I was poor, my children were starving." If with blasphemy, we might say, "I was overcome with provocation and passion." But for indolent neglect of God's Son there is no excuse. The basest of all sins is the sin of ingratitude.

4. We found that a garden needs water. So at some expense we provided ourselves with a garden hose that through the long summer days the garden might not parch with heat, but might be induced to a larger fruitfulness. The Christian life needs not only stimulation from within, but generous outpourings from above. It must be watered with the showers of God's face, and often refreshed with baptisms from on high. Outpourings of the Holy Spirit must keep it from withering and barrenness. Our hose was too short to reach the furthest corners of the garden, and there the plants were feeble and scanty. Some of us

wonder at the barrenness of our spiritual lives. The reason is that we never come under the sprinklings of divine grace. We are content to deny ourselves spiritual refreshing. You sometimes wonder why the pastor forever urges upon you the importance of the prayer meeting, and you grow weary of his exhortations. It is not for the pastor's sake that he emphasizes these things. But he knows that without these outpourings of grace your life is likely to be all withered and fruitless. Let us pray to-day for the descent of the Holy Spirit on all our hearts.

5. Your garden needs not only general, but special cultivation. Each bed is a problem by itself. The kind of plant, its nature, needs and habits will determine the attention required. One general spading in the Spring will not do. Peas, cucumbers, radishes, corn must be hoed, hilled, trenched, tended in different ways. But in our spiritual lives we imagine that one good new year's spading and harrowing will do for a year. This is a mistake. God has given us three hundred and sixty-five garden beds for the year 1898, each requiring separate and peculiar treatment. We cannot tell what each needs till we get to it. Our care must be perpetual. A general heart-searching to-day will not suffice. Every day must be searched and cared for individually. Some of us fail in our spiritual lives because we do not pay attention to the days. God cares for the days—"As thy days

so shall thy strength be." "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." "Lo, I am with you all the days." When we arise each morning this year let us say: "God has assigned me a fresh new garden-bed to-day, set with choice and delicate opportunities. I must watch, water and cultivate it or these delicate plants will be broken, choked and fruitless."

> "Up and down our lives obedient
> Walk, dear Christ, with footsteps radiant,
> Till these garden lives shall be
> Fair with duties done for thee."

6. We soon learned that our right to the soil was not to go unchallenged. All over our garden there quickly sprang up a multitude of little weeds, which, if left for a time, grew so rank and tall as to absorb a large part of the nourishment needed by the plants, so that while the plants still stood and grew a little, yet their vigor was choked out and they produced no fruit. Every weed must be ruthlessly torn from its place, or the garden would suffer. The weeds of prejudice, indolence and sin growing up in our lives must be promptly and mercilessly removed, or no fruit of the Spirit can grow and mature. The reason some of our lives are so barren of good is that we allow, right in among the plants and flowers of our spiritual life, these hateful habits and vices and weeds of sin to grow and develop. We sometimes wonder why our lives are so stagnant and fruitless. May it not be

that we are choked to death by prejudice, passion, and habit ?

But we discovered something about weeds which was quite new to us. All over our garden, among the other weeds, there grew little tufts of harmless looking grass. Through the early summer we carefully removed this, but when the plants were well grown and the fruit nearly mature, we said to ourselves, "There's no need to dig this grass out any more. The plants have got the start of it. Let it go. The autumn frosts will kill it, the snow of winter and the warmth of spring will rot it and make it fertilize the garden another year." Judge of our surprise to find in a few weeks our little tufts of grass grown into great sharp, stiff reeds, too firm to root out, and every blade tipped with a big bristling, thorny sand-bur. So all through the late autumn we had these ugly sand-burs blowing about our garden and lawn, sticking to our clothing and shoes, and piercing our hands with their vicious thorns. The weeds had a sting which we had not suspected, and we paid dearly for every one we left. Sometimes, after struggling for months and years against an old habit of selfishness and sin, we seem to say to ourselves, "Let it go. I'm tired fighting against it, and I don't believe we were ever intended to be faultless. Anyway, it won't matter now, my habits are fixed, and though I am not all I should be, yet I know I'm far enough along in the Christian life

to be safe." But beware. Every weed of sin is tipped with a thorn which by and by will surely rise up to pierce our unsuspecting feet, or to curse the generations coming after us. For Christ's sake, for our own character's sake, for the sake of souls yet unborn, let us tear out the old sin and fling it from us. For God hates it, and has banished all sin forever from his presence.

7. We learned that, unless gathered in due time, the fruits of the garden may be wasted and lost. If you will look over in the north-east corner of our garden, by the alley fence, you will see peering above the deep snow several rows of old cornstalks with blackened and withered leaves. They were fresh and good once and might have made many a delicious meal for some hungry beast. A needy neighbor would have been glad of them, but, busy with other things, we neglected them, and now they stand to reproach us for an inexcusable waste of God's bounty. The fruit of our Christian effort is often thus misused. We pray and toil and cultivate and bring to fruitage, and never gather in. We speak the word of Christian counsel and encouragement, and then leave the seed to rot or the fruit to dry up and perish. You say, "I am not skilled to speak to men about the things of God." For shame! Has your Father so made you that you cannot speak of him? You are skilled. You have spoken wisely many times, but you lack courage,

or faith, or interest ; or you were too busy to follow it up, and your effort perished. When you stand before God he will say : "My child, I had almost given you that soul for your crown of rejoicing, and you went away and neglected it after it was won." May Christ help us to garner the fruits he sends us !

8. All too short was our happy summer for successful gardening. The days passed more swiftly than we worked. A multitude of duties forbade the strict attention our little field deserved, and before we were aware our plants had outgrown us and autumn was at hand to bid us cease from toil. So swiftly will this dawning year pass by. Almost before we have put our hands to its duties will the opportunity be gone. And so our lives. In childhood days little brother and I used to amuse ourselves by chasing the clouds across the summer meadows. Between sun and earth some fleecy cloud would sail, while its wide black shadow traversed the landscape. In boyish play we ran from fence to fence to see if we might not outrun the big cool space and come out victors in the race. But we never could quite outrun the cloud. Before we reached the goal the shadow had touched and passed it, and panting with exhaustion we paused to rest from the strife.

"Our life is a dream ; our time, as a stream,
Glides swiftly away,
And the fugitive moment refuses to stay.

The arrow is flown,—the moment is gone;
The millennial year
Rushes on to our view, and eternity's here."

Soon, very soon, before we are aware, will the summer of our lives be past, and we shall stand in the presence of the Great Husbandman to display, with joy, the sheaves and clusters of life's industry, or with shame and dread, the empty, guilty hands of sloth and faithlessness. May the garden of our lives be all beauteous with the fruits and flowers of holy living, and the harvest fit to be welcomed in a faultless world.

A. T. FERGUSON.

THE VISION OF THE INVISIBLE.

BY REV. A. T. FERGUSON,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, Manistee, Mich.

Text: "For he endured as seeing him who is invisible." Heb. 12:27.

This statement was made concerning Moses, the servant of God. It contains the secret of his wonderful constancy. He was sustained by an inward principle of faith in the unseen. He had what might be called a God-consciousness. The presence and providence of Jehovah, his God, were real to his thought. His faith was "the evidence of things not seen," and so in all the vicissitudes of his eventful life "he endured as seeing him who is invisible."

Moses was a remarkable man. He stands without a rival among the heroes of antiquity. He had a many-sided distinction. He was great in generalship; no other military leader ever led such a host through such a wilderness. He was great in statesmanship; no other statesman ever wrought so barbarous a people into so perfect a commonwealth in so short a

time. He was great as a historian ; his history is at once the oldest and most reliable concerning our race up to the time in which he lived. Its authority is still recognized by the scholarship of the world. He was great as a lawgiver ; his laws are the basis of all righteous legislation to the present time. He was great in moral character ; he not only impressed his own generation with a sense of his worth, but he is still revered by both Jews and Christians as a faithful servant of God. In the face of allurements, trials and difficulties such as seldom fall to the lot of men, he maintained his religious integrity to the end of life, serving in old age the God to whom he had consecrated his early years. He was truly a great man.

The life history of Moses is naturally divided into three periods of forty years each. The first forty years were spent in Egypt as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. The second forty years were spent in retirement in the land of Midian, where he patiently waited the fruition of the divine purpose, serving in the humble capacity of a herdsman. The last forty years were occupied with what was the real work of his life, and for which the former periods had been only preparatory, namely, the delivery of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, and their organization into a nation with proper laws, government and religious ordinances. Each of these periods brought to Moses its own peculiar trials and temptations, but

whatever the strain put upon him "he endured as seeing him who is invisible."

God's great men have ever been tried men. He does not entrust great responsibilities to raw recruits. Moral as well as physical muscle develops by exercise. Strength of character is often nurtured in the soil of adverse circumstances. Moses met his first test in Egypt. It was the test of prosperity, which has proved so disastrous to many a human soul. His high social position as the adopted son of a royal princess secured to him many outward advantages. He grew up amid the refining influences of artistic surroundings. He enjoyed the best educational facilities of his day. "He was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," which no doubt, in addition to the common branches, included military tactics and statesmanship. In the purpose of God these things were an important part of his preparation for the work to which he was called in after years, as the deliverer and lawgiver of Israel. But these very advantages, with the luxurious life which they made possible and the alluring prospect of wealth and honor and power which they spread before him, must have been a great temptation to him. He had grown up with a knowledge of his kinship with the oppressed Israelites, and he seems to have had a conviction, or at least an impression, that in some way he was to be the agent of God in their deliverance; but there was a very wide

difference between his circumstances and theirs. On his side were wealth, worldly honor and preferment; on their side poverty, toil and cruel bondage. What a temptation it would be to most men to renounce kinship with Israel and hold fast the pleasures and treasures of Egypt. Moses was but a man, with a nature like our own, and we may suppose that these things appealed to him as they would to us. And yet, in spite of these fascinating prospects, "Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." The teaching and prayers of his godly mother had not been in vain. The faith begotten in his young mind and heart and the hope inspired by the promises of God, were mightier in their power over him than all the forces of evil. And so at the age of forty years we find him uncorrupted by the influences of court life. He had kept himself separate from Egyptian idolatry, resisted the lure of worldliness, and maintained his character as a true son of Abraham. He had endured his first period of testing "as seeing him who is invisible."

The next period of forty years brought him trials of another kind: the discipline of hope deferred and

purposes seemingly thwarted. Moses had identified himself with his brethren, sympathizing with them in their burdens, and in defense of one of them he smote a cruel Egyptian to death; but when on the following day he essayed to adjust a difference between two contending Israelites, they indignantly repudiated his interference and taunted him with his slaughter of the Egyptian. He was disappointed. "He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them;" but they did not. All the thanks he got for the sacrifice he was making in their behalf was a surly rejection of his friendly intervention. Like many another well-meaning reformer he had attempted to go before he was sent. God's time for the Exodus was not yet fully come. Neither Moses nor the people of Israel were yet ready for that great event. Moses, the rash and impetuous leader, must be disciplined by years of patient waiting, and humble service, and solitary communion with God, into a character of quiet strength that could meekly bear with opposition, and steadily pursue his heaven-appointed course. The Israelites must come to feel more keenly the cruelty of their oppressors before their day of deliverance could come. It is easy for us, in the light of subsequent events, to see these and perhaps other reasons why delay was necessary, but if we had stood in Moses' place we should have been perplexed, as no doubt he was, at the strange turn of

affairs. He had to flee for his life; and so he who had expected to be a deliverer of the oppressed, went out of Egypt as a lonely fugitive to seek a hiding place in the land of Midian. How strangely the simple shepherd life to which he had come must have contrasted with the life to which he had hitherto been accustomed! How strange to go from the bustle and din of the city to the solitude of the desert—from the company of scholars and statesmen to the companionship of the dumb creatures committed to his care! But this contrast was not the only nor indeed the greatest trial: there was the perplexity resulting from disappointed hope. He had espoused the cause of Israel in good faith. He put himself and all his prospects in life into it. Had he made a mistake? Had his faith been unfounded? Had he misunderstood the divine purpose? The mental struggles of those silent years are not recorded; but we may imagine the questionings that would arise as the days and years of solitude passed by. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Disappointment and defeat are trying experiences. But however perplexing this long delay may have been, Moses patiently waited in the discharge of his shepherd duties, growing strong and gentle in communion with God, and thus he endured his second great test, as "seeing him who is invisible."

And now we pass to the third period of his life. The years of preparation had served their purpose.

God's time for deliverance had come. Moses was fitted for leadership ; the Israelites were weary of their servitude. One day the attention of Moses was attracted by the appearance of a flaming bush. As he stood wondering that the bush burned and yet was not consumed, God called him by name and proceeded to commission him as his ambassador to Pharaoh in behalf of his oppressed people. Then began another series of trials. First of all he had to overcome his own misgivings. He who had been so enthusiastic forty years before that he was ready to go before he was sent, now found himself reluctant to undertake so great a responsibility even at the call of God. The dash of young manhood had given place to the cautiousness of maturer years. He now realized something of the difficulty of the situation and would gladly have been excused. "Who am I," said he, "that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt ?" He knew how unwilling Pharaoh and his people would be to relinquish their hold upon two millions of slaves whose unrequited toil was adding wealth to their masters. It might cost him his life even to suggest such a thing. Moreover, even if he should succeed in getting their release from Pharaoh there was the almost hopeless task of conducting so great a multitude of people into a distant and strange land, now in the possession of a hostile people. And yet, in spite of all

his fears, in the face of looming difficulties, obedient to a divine call and encouraged by divine promises, Moses went to work with faith "in him who is invisible." He faced the Egyptian king, and after repeated denials won his suit; the king said, "Go." He rallied the Israelites and they fell into line for the weary march from Egypt to Canaan. It would seem now as if the severest trials were past. But it was not so. A man's worst foes are often those of his own household, and Moses' greatest trials came from the lack of spirit on the part of the Israelites themselves. The years of subjection and servitude had ground out of them all lofty ambition, all the spirit of self-reliance. They were like children, impulsive, fickle, ready to turn back at every danger, with muttered complaints against Moses and against God. Moses often had to stand alone against their faithless murmurings. He had to supply the faith, the courage, the inspiration for the whole vast company. This was the case at the Red Sea and at other points in their journey. At one time in his temporary absence they rejected both Moses and God, and set up a golden calf saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." At another time they utterly rebelled against his leadership and refused to enter the promised land. It is easy to be patient with real babies, but it is provoking to have men and women act like babies; to have to

carry those who ought to walk alone, and to pet and coax those who ought to help us bear the common burden. Such were some of the trials of Moses' later life, and yet how meekly and patiently he bore them! Only in a single instance did he give way to sinful anger and fail to glorify God before the people. Thus through a life of one hundred and twenty years of varied circumstances, of great disappointment, of deferred hopes, and of severe trial, he lived a faithful, conscientious, God-honoring life. "He endured as seeing him who is invisible."

The secret of that marvelous character was his apprehension of God. He saw, by faith, him who is invisible to sight. To see what is invisible seems like a contradiction of terms, but in reality it is not so. Faith is a higher sense, and like the lower senses it has a function all its own. It is "the evidence of things not seen"; the persuasion of the reality of things invisible. We use this sense in every-day life. We trust one another. We accept testimony concerning facts of which we have no personal knowledge. We risk great interests upon scientific principles which we have not personally verified. We recognize in men invisible qualities of truthfulness and honesty. We believe in them. We have a persuasion that they will do as they agree to do. In like manner our faith apprehends God. We see his works in nature, in providence and in redemption. He is real to our

thought. We believe in him; we trust him; we count upon him. Such faith is the foundation of all true religion. "Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Faith in God enables us to see things in their relative importance. We have sometimes seen a picture by an amateur artist in which there was a faulty perspective. Some objects were more prominent and others less so than they ought to be. This is the case with many who picture to themselves a successful life. Their perspective is not true to fact. They put things in false relations. The things of earth—transient, perishing things—are magnified in the foreground, and the imperishable, eternal things of character and destiny are relegated to the background. Faith in God and in his revealed truth gives us a true perspective. By faith Moses saw that "the pleasures of sin" were but "for a season," and that rewards of righteousness were eternal. Wealth and luxury and worldly honor would soon come to an end, but he himself must live forever. Oh, that people everywhere might see this—that the pleasures of sin are but for a season; that when all the sweets of sinful indulgence have been tasted; when all the fruits of covetousness have been gathered; when one has lived to its close his selfish, God-forgetting, God-dishonoring

life, he himself must go on into eternity to think and feel and remember forever. It is said that over the triple doorway of the Cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions spanning the splendid arches. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses and underneath it are the words, "All that pleases us is but for a moment." Over the arch on the other side is a sculptured cross with the words, "All that troubles us is but for a moment." Then spanning the great central arch is the inscription, "That only is important which is eternal." This represents the vision of faith. "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

(2) Faith in God brings almighty power to our help in the struggles against sin. It is one thing to set before us a worthy ideal of character; it is another thing to attain unto it. Many a one is struggling against the evil within and around him, but is struggling to little purpose because he struggles alone. What he needs is not more effort, but more faith—the faith that appropriates God's promises of almighty help. A right life is not merely a matter of having a right purpose. There is a supernatural element in it. It was a saying of Wesley that "no power but that which made the world can make a Christian." God says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved"—saved not

only in the sense of having our guilt forgiven, but also in the sense of being delivered from the power and dominion of sin. "A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." A right life is a standing miracle of grace; the inworking of divine power in answer to a living faith in Christ as the Savior of sinners. God does wonderful things for those who trust him. He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to his power that worketh in us." He is "mighty to save."

(3) Faith in God inspires the soul with courage and hope in the trying experiences of life. God said to Moses, "Surely I will be with thee," and this assurance gave him calmness and confidence in every emergency. The man who "sees him who is invisible" is nerved for heroic service. David Livingstone, who spent thirty-three years of his life in Central Africa, amid perils and privations and discouragements, wrote, "Nothing earthly will make me give up my work in despair. I encourage myself in the Lord my God and go forward." When William Carey began his pioneer missionary work in India, he wrote in his diary at the close of a hard day's work, "India for

Christ! Men call it an idle dream, but I know it is a sure prophecy." When Dr. Morrison was on his way to China a sea captain asked him, "Do you think you can make an impression upon the four hundred millions of Chinese!" "No," he answered, "but God can." These men were not blind to the difficulties they had to meet in planting the gospel in those lands, but they saw rising above every obstacle the purpose of the Almighty, and in this faith they were confident and hopeful. It was written long ago, "The people who know their God shall be strong and do exploits." Faith in "him who is invisible" made mighty men of Joshua, and Gideon, and David; of Elijah, and Daniel, and Paul. It was this faith which nerved the hearts of Luther, and Knox, and Wesley, for their arduous work of religious reformation. The vision of the invisible gave calmness to the immortal Lincoln in some of the darkest days of the Civil War. He "trusted in the name of the Lord, and stayed himself upon his God." England's greatest statesman, Hon. Wm. E. Gladstone, was sustained in the toils and trials of a long continued public life by what he called "an inextinguishable hope" of the overthrow of wrong and the triumph of right. And the same thing is true in the lowlier walks of life. "Seeing him who is invisible" is the secret of all Christliness of character and life. "Beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord we

are transformed into the same image from glory to glory." By faith, timid women are living beautiful Christian lives in spite of the opposition of ungodly husbands. By faith Christian young people are overcoming the allurements of the world, and maintaining a good conscience toward God and men. By faith men are honoring God in their business affairs, resisting fierce temptations to sinful indulgence, and witnessing to an unbelieving world Christ's saving and keeping power. As the attraction of the sun holds the earth in its orbit, so does faith in God regulate the whole course of our life. We can be what we ought to be, do what we ought to do, bear what we ought to bear, and resist what we ought to resist, if we are duly sensible of God's presence and love—if by faith we see "him who is invisible."

W. L. LAUFMAN.

CONSEQUENCE OF LOSING LIFE.

BY REV. WM. L. LAUFMAN, A. M., S. T. B.,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, Cadillac, Mich.

Text: "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (forfeit his life?—R. V.)" Mark 8:36.

Here is a problem of fact, a question in mathematics, a study in profit and loss. Are the questions of theology too unreal for your investigation and her demands too vague for your compliance? Have you the impression that the basis of faith as well as her conclusions therefrom are intangible? Then you never studied this problem. Are you a man of the world, much-traveled and well versed in the value of her treasures? Are you a man of affairs, a student of profit and loss? Are you so much a part of this so-called matter of fact age that you have caught what you think is its spirit, and let only those things appeal to you that can be weighed and counted? Then this is a problem for you. None else can solve it. Bring all your wisdom and see if you are able even to grasp it. What nonsense, that religion is for weaklings and the uninformed! What display of ignorance is the

insinuation itself! Theology is the realm of hard fact. There are mystical and speculative by-paths in which the uninitiated may lose the way. But so are there such by-paths in all sciences. Only one system of mathematics is forever true, and that is the equations of righteousness. Only one inductive science is complete, and that is life. Only one philosophy is fixed, and that is salvation.

In the old arithmetics we studied in childhood, the answers to problems were in the key book, and we solved them under orders not to consult those pages. But we were not in the dark, for there were always some worked out as examples or models for our guidance, and besides, there were means of verifying the results, so that we did not complain or call arithmetic an inexact science. Rather we worked on, trusting the wisdom of our teachers, and now we see that had the answers not been concealed we had never found them for ourselves and the problems would have been unsolved, thus thwarting the very end desired by us. And so when we are set to life-problems and foolishly beg for written answers, our Master is only true to the method of the wise teacher when he intimates that at last we shall understand, though now we know only in part. But he has worked out a great model and has given the means of verifying our solutions, so that life, after all, is mathematics, and is to be solved by its rules. Sometimes, in the books,

older pupils have written their answers. Just so in the Bible, pupils of the past have written their answers. The captious pupil may say they may or may not be correct, but the careful student, finding that his conclusions agree with those written in, values them as added proof that he is correct.

But there is no answer written in after this problem. The pupils, if any have solved it, have strangely forgotten to give the solution or even to give us the method. Some problems are not solvable. Some are solved by the statement of the terms, though it be impossible to formulate the conclusion. Some are stated simply to appall or to call attention to the fact that there is no common unit of measure. Such a problem is this. To measure the first term is impossible. *The whole world!* What is that? Who can measure it or weigh it? How much gold and silver has it? How many acres? What cities of wealth, libraries of learning, what opportunities for pleasure! What absurdity that one man should possess such talent as to be able to gain it! Yet these must be assumed. Imagine them then, for they are easier far than the task that follows. You who throw your thought to the stars and tie the centuries together in sheaves like wheat, you are to take in the thought of the first term, the whole world gained by trade and barter. Wealthier than any Rothschild, more famed than any Caesar, more mighty than any Napoleon,

more wise than any Solomon. Have you thought it through? You must. This is the basis, this is the unit of measure.

And now the second term demands our attention. *Lose the soul.* At first thought this seems easier of comprehension than the other. We are familiar with its phraseology. It is related to the foundation truths of religion. It is the burden of every sermon and the fear of every man. Can it not be easily stated? But can it? Here, too, is a world. Man is a microcosm. So is the world. Both are miniatures of the wide outlying universe. One world is balanced against another. Which world is the greater? Ah, who can say, since neither of the worlds has been measured! Let us try to measure the soul.

Some light is thrown upon the meaning of the word from the revised text, *forfeit life.* No narrow definition of the word *soul* will reveal the Master's mind. Life is correspondence with environment, or at least is revealed in that way. No narrow definition of the word *life* will reveal the Master's mind, either. High life, the noblest part of the individual, is involved in the question. What will it profit, the Master seems to be saying, if a man gain the whole world and lose the ability to communicate with that world by any of the faculties of his nature? And the exact word he used, translated *life* or *soul*, is witness to the fact that having in mind the loss of the noblest powers of

being, he meant to hint the possibility of forfeiting life in nobler environments than these. If the power to gain worlds has gone, not only is the world already gained lost, but all other worlds the man might gain are also lost. Thus his proposition startles. What an awful forfeit! Who can imagine this? And beginning now with life's simplest manifestations, let us proceed to study the immensity of the forfeit.

Having assumed in the first term that you have gained the world, that every wealth and pleasure is yours, that none speaks your name but to praise it, none remembers you but to love you, then let me, like some grim-visaged fate, come to you and tell you that you are dying with an incurable disease, then what profit would there be? True, it is not much to die. The breaking of a film of tissue, the interruption, though but for a moment, of the action of a single organ, or the taking of but one foul breath, may bring it to pass. It might even be argued with plausibility that such dire consequence could scarce follow such slight or insignificant cause. But it does. And you are not now disposed to study into causes and reasons why. You are sick and there is no remedy, and so there is no profit from the world so lately gained, for the power to enjoy it has gone. Is it worth while to approach you now with the problem? Let us whisper into your ear that your family will be well cared for with such fabulous wealth that your

great name will never be forgotten, that your achievements will be the marvel of history. Do these compensate even for the loss of health? Where then can profit be found? These are but bubbles, and a man does not blow bubbles at such a time as this. Can you forget your doom? Does it not overshadow all? Can the thorn be taken from your pillow or the load from your heart? Alas, the evil days have come and the years drawn nigh when there is no pleasure in them! Man goeth to his long home. A sweet-faced girl in the home of wealth lies dying. Her flaxen hair lies like a halo about her head. In her delirium she begs for a piano. Unable to deny her a last request and yet well aware that she cannot enjoy it, her friends buy it and place it in her room. From her bed she rises from sheer strength of will. She sits to play. Her nerveless fingers but feebly strike the chords. Then there is a moan and a discord on the keys, and she is gone. What was the profit? Behold a parable of life. With dying fingers we try to draw music from life's key-board, but every day there is a moan and a cry, and the psalm of life is a discord. In his beautiful home a man of reputation, family and wealth lay sick. There were unfavorable symptoms and the physician was hastily called. At a glance he knew that the man's hour had come, and gently he broke the news to him and his family. At once the man's terror and grief became pitiable. He begged

his doctor to do something for him. Loved ones tried without avail to comfort him. They spoke of his name, of his wealth and of his success. But he turned a deaf ear. With his face to the wall he shrieked, "The poorest man in the city, who is ready to die, is richer than I!" Ah, he had solved the problem, but too late.

We may now advance a step in our study. The life of the physical is not all, though if it were there could scarce be profit. There are other lives that go to make the total of life that can be forfeited by world gaining. It is a question if Jesus meant at all to include the physical life in the word which he chose. So now let me approach you as a world-gainer and ask, what will it profit if you gain the whole world and lose or forfeit your intellectual life? Let me tell you that, though otherwise well, your mind will soon be a blank, that you will soon be unable to remember or to reason, and that, although all the world is yours, you will be even unable to know it. With how much patience then would you hear me state the problem? If in a madman's cell amid your ravings I call you to your senses but for a moment, to ask if now you would give the world to be able to control your mind, how gladly and quickly you would offer it. "Give me," you cry, "the power to think the thoughts of God, the power to feel the beauty of art and the pleasures of literature! The poorest man or woman

who can remember or think is infinitely richer than I." Ah, what is the profit? In 1866 there fled from this continent to Paris and then to Rome, Carlotta, the empress of Mexico. Discouraged and disheartened, because unable to obtain favor from Napoleon or Pope Pius, the beautiful young woman lost her reason. The awful calamities resulting in the downfall and death of Maximilian soon followed, but she knows it not. From her beautiful home, Miramar, overlooking the Adriatic, she awaits in her delirium the coming of Maximilian. "Oh, why is he so long in coming to me," is her oft-repeated cry from a heart so sorely bereaved. What profit to be empress or to be in the midst of such beauty and comfort? The very capacity to enjoy her world is lost. She has solved the problem, but too late.

But the problem is not yet compassed. Had these two aspects alone been in the mind of Christ the question had been vast enough. But it is larger than that. The body is not all there is of life, nor is even the mind its measure. Devils in hell may be in full possession of these faculties, and yet be awfully lost. If the new translation be followed that the life may be forfeited, then the highest department of all should be included. Or if the Master simply had in view the highest faculties, indicated by the word *soul*, in either case we may inquire, what will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose or forfeit his

own soul? What is it to lose the soul? Can the ego, the personality, lose the soul-faculties just as it loses mind or body sensibilities? Certainly there is a common use of the word in this way. The wages of sin is death, and the individual lives to suffer his soul death. Persons in perdition with power to remember, to reason and regret are suffering the death of the soul, the forfeit of the life.

The body dies when through its five senses it ceases to communicate or correspond with its surroundings. The mind is lost when through its four faculties, the presentative, the representative, the reflective and the intuitive, it ceases to correspond or communicate with its surroundings. So does the soul cease to live when through the three channels of its action, faith, hope and love, it ceases to correspond or communicate with its environments. The ego continues to exist after the soul is lost, just as it continues to exist after the mind is lost. Devils in hell, with intellects keen as can be imagined, believe in Christ and in terror shriek his name, but they have no faith or hope or love, and hell is where these are not. Hell as a place is little to be feared or thought of. Hell as a condition of life is to be shunned as the builder of the place.

"I, myself, am hell."

The most appalling possibility of life is that hell may grow up within us until it crowds out the best of

life and we become hell itself. A few months ago a decrepit old woman appeared before her judge and begged his clemency on the ground that she was an awful accident. "Judge," she cried, "pity me. I am not as other women are. I have no soul. Motives and fears that help or hinder others I have never felt. O judge, have pity!" What an awful conception! And yet her very cry showed that she was mistaken. Some faith and hope had she, or the prayer had never been spoken. But by her side there stood a poor wretch, not only as hardened in crime as she, but actually glorying in her shame and laughing at the judge in fiendish leer when he extended to her the clemency she did not deserve or appreciate. Ah, how many the world has in it whose souls seem entirely dead! It is the great task of our holy faith to awaken these sleeping souls who, under the opiate of sin and vice, are unconsciously dying and for whom there can be no awakening beyond the grave. Oh, the darkness of a living tomb! No faith, no trust. No moral sense to guide, no conscience to check. The mad passions and base desires the only impulses and the only right. Foul is fair, and vice and filth seem desirable. The just laws that regulate and restrain seem base tyranny to be overstepped and broken whenever possible. No faith, then no trust in God. His sunshine fills all the world, but not a ray can pierce the gloom of that prison cell. A tyrant to be cursed and feared, and

every act to be construed as hostile, such is God and his providence. No trust in God, then no trust in man. The world is full of devils. And because faith is dead, love is also dead. Like Cain, all the world is found to be hostile. Even those sweet ties that bind together in happiest fellowship are chains that enslave. Home, and church, and mother, and state, and friend, and child are now but symbols of hate and distrust. And above all else, because trust and love are dead, all the hope of the years is blasted. Ah, who could live without hope, that mighty anchor which so often holds alone against the seaward drift?

Behold then the utter lonesomeness of sin when it has grown to ripeness! Judas went out and it was night, the darkest night his poor lost soul had ever felt. In "The Deemster," Hall Caine's best book, poor Dan Mylrea, good-hearted but blunt and misunderstood, suffers the utter loneliness of sin when as an outcast and a fugitive he seeks his solitary shelter on the beach. In Edward Everett Hale's "A Man Without a Country" the same graphic picture is sketched, as the man who cursed his flag pays the penalty of his sin in his perpetual exile. But in none of these is all the story told. This is the despair of literature. Nor was there ever a painter with colors dark enough to picture it. Oh, the loneliness, the hatefulness, the hopelessness, when the soul is lost! Nor is this all, for memory, like a wild Nemesis, will for a long eter-

nity bring up the past to torture with the reminder of what might and should have been.

> "And of all sad words of tongue or pen,
> The saddest are these, it might have been."

The man born blind has no such longings to see as the man who once has known the beauty of the world. So will the very fact that faith and hope and love were possible and delightful add to its pain.

> "For the sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier days."

And now, world-gainer, will you listen to my problem? Has the world you are gaining anything to put alongside the world you are losing? Is there anywhere any compensation for the immeasurable loss in the forfeit of life? No wonder the profits were never written in. For the terms are too vast, and the first so exclusive of the other that to state them or even to attempt statement is to bring all the solution possible. And nevertheless, this is the whole problem of life. More are seeking to solve it than all other problems beside. And all about us the wreckage of humanity, lives forfeited by the process of world-gaining. They drift aimlessly awhile, and then they mercifully sink out of our vision beneath the kin- waves of forgetfulness. They have solved the problem, but too late!

JOS. P. MacCARTHY.

CENTRAL M. E. CHURCH, MUSKEGON, MICH.

THE GOD-MAN.

BY REV. JOSEPH P. MAC CARTHY, PH. D.,

Pastor of M. E. Church, Muskegon, Mich.

Text: "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" Matthew 22:42.

The question before us is one of vastly more importance than the disposition of the Philippines or the annexation of Hawaii. It is of more concern to you than what you think of civil service reform or the problems of capital and labor. It does not touch upon what particular opinion you may entertain with regard to baptism. Oh, no! that is not the question. Neither is it what do you think of me? That makes but very little difference. It has no reference whatever to what you may think of any particular denomination, for in my judgment that matters little. I like best to think of God's universal church as a great locomotive, and of the various denominations as making up its parts. I am not concerned as to what part you form or what part you take. You can pour water into the Baptist boiler, blow the Free Methodist whistle, ring the Salvation Army bell, or shovel coal

into the old Methodist fire box, just as you like. All these questions I have mentioned are fraught with deep significance, but the most significant, the most momentous, the most thrilling question for every immortal being is the question of my text, "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" All these other questions pertain to time, but this will stand before us when time has rolled away and we stand amidst all the realties of eternity.

What think ye of Christ? What think ye of his *divinity?* There are many in this age of skeptics who question the divinity of Christ. Let us not enter the great theological controversies as to Christ's divinity, but just look for a moment at his moral character and see if we can conceive of him as other than the divine one. We have, first of all, the unanimous testimony of all men for two thousand years as to Christ's perfect moral character. No character has been subjected to such scrutiny, and none compares with it in purity. We are accustomed to regard Socrates as the purest man of antiquity, and yet even Rousseau said, "If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God." We look to Plato and Aristotle as high-minded representatives of their day, but what age has not questioned the personal morals of these ancient ethical teachers? Where is the biographer that could say the moral character of Martin Luther, Calvin,

John Knox, Cotton Mather, or even of John Wesley, was absolutely without a flaw? On the other hand, critic after critic and skeptic after skeptic has examined into the moral character of Jesus, only to recoil and confess that it was absolute purity. As one writer has said, "It is beyond doubt that no being has yet appeared in human form whom the suffrage of the race has pronounced so pure, so holy as Jesus Christ. A beam of white radiance, pure as the light of God's throne, proceeds from his eye, falling along all succeeding ages." Goethe, the genius of Germany, calls Jesus the "divine man," and Carlyle, the Goethe of England, says the life of the Savior is a "perfect ideal poem," while Rousseau says, "The history of Jesus Christ has marks of truth so palpable, so striking and so perfectly inimitable that its inventor would excite our admiration more than its hero." But why further illustrate? No man of reason has ever questioned the moral character of Jesus, and now we ask the simple question, was it possible for this person to tell the blackest kind of falsehoods every day? Our reason stands aghast at such an ordeal of the imagination. As Peter Bayne once said, "The crushing of all the stars into powder in one grasp of God's hand would not be such a miracle." But this Jesus of Nazareth constantly and deliberately asserted his power to heal the sick, cure the blind and raise the dead. The simple question is, Did he lie? Every rational being

answers, He could not lie. Then, is not the logic irresistible? He did cure the blind, heal the sick and raise the dead, and who, tell me, can raise the dead but him who is clothed with all the attributes of deity? What think ye of Christ's divinity? I asked the most intelligent Unitarian lady that I ever met what she thought of Christ? She said, "He was a good man, but not divine." A mere man, *good*, who went about representing himself as the *Son of God*, who made himself equal with God? I speak with reverence when I say that if Jesus was not the Son of God he was the most consummate blasphemer that ever walked the earth. Indeed, "a *good* man, but not divine!" Oh, my Unitarian friend, do not show your lack of reason, do not reveal your ignorance of history, do not show your utter imbecility by confessing Christ to be a good man; he is *all* or *nothing*.

But if we return to the sacred word, we find that heaven, earth and hell—angels, men and devils—all witnessed that Jesus was the son of God. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.'" Mathew 3:16, 17. "Now, when the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus saw the earthquake and those things that were done,

they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God.'" Matthew 27:54. "And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, * * * and when he saw Jesus afar off he ran and worshiped him, and cried with a loud voice and said, 'What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the Most High God?'" Mark 5:2, 6, 7. "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?"

What think ye of Christ as a *Savior?* Away back in the centuries the prophet Isaiah asked this question: "Who is he that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?" And this same Christ, as the Jehovah of the Old Testament, gives the answer that is still ringing throughout the world: "I that speak in righteousness; mighty to save." What, indeed, as a Savior? Is he mighty to save? Look at that persecutor dashing off for Damascus, ready to lash, imprison or murder every man or woman that confessed the name of Jesus. Look again, and that Paul is standing before Felix preaching of "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come." Look again. His hands are bound, his feet fast, his body half naked, and he is enduring all the agonies of a Roman prison. Why does he do all this! Because he has been saved by that Jesus whom he once persecuted. Oh, what a trans-

formation of character! Look at the young man, John Bunyan. He is born of a low gypsy woman; he is vile, he is vulgar and blasphemous. But the glory of the Savior shines about him and he has his pen in hand and is describing the "Delectable Mountains" and pointing a sinful world toward the "Celestial City." What think ye of Christ as a savior? What did Polycarp think of Christ as a savior? He was nearly ninety years old when they tried to make him renounce his faith. They brought him into the amphitheatre and the pro-consul said to him: "Swear and I will release thee—reproach Christ, and I will let thee go." But the grand old saint replied, "Eighty and six years do I serve him and never hath he injured me. How can I blaspheme my King and Savior?" "I will cause thee to be consumed by fire. I have wild beasts," said the persecutor. "Call them," replied the hero, and he perished in the flames, thanking God that he had a Savior worth dying for.

But we notice that the text is a direct, a *personal* question, as the Master was speaking to those in his immediate presence. "What think ye?" It does not concern you so much what others think, but "what think *ye* of Christ?" You that are personally acquainted with Christ, what think ye? What think ye, aged ones, whose hoary locks are almost "sweeping the feet of deity," ye who have followed him twenty, thirty, it may be fifty years, come, tell us that

have not known him so long. Did he ever leave you? Will he ever forsake us? Your hearts reply, blessed be Christ, he never forsakes, but has ever verified the promise, "I will be with you alway." Yes, and he has another promise for you to-day. He says to you whose journey is almost ended, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." What think ye who have been sorely tempted? Oh, how much easier it seems for some to live pure lives than for others! What think ye who have the strongest hereditary tendencies to evil? Has not Christ always with the temptation provided a way of escape? Oh, yes, and he tells you again to-day, "To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God." What think ye who are wearing the emblems of sorrow, who have lost loved ones? When you buried that precious mother did he not "sanctify to you your deepest distress?" Did he not give unto you "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and a garment of praise for a spirit of heaviness?" Were you not able to cry with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him?" What think ye who have labored under great disadvantages, who have always had a "hard row," or who have made yourselves unpopular by always adhering to what you conceived to be right—you who have sometimes felt that all the world was against you? In all these things were you not "more than con-

querors through him that loved you?" Many of God's children have a hard time, but when Christ is with them what are adverse circumstances, the opinions of men, or poverty? What is temptation? What is the devil? "If God be for us who can be against us?" Sinners, what think ye of Christ? Do you who disbelieve think that he was joking when he said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Do you men with red noses think that he was jesting when he said, "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God?" What do you that misrepresent things in your business relations think of him who said, "All liars shall have their place in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone?" What think ye? But while you remember the threatenings of Christ bear in mind also his promises, for he said among other things, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Do you think you are too great a sinner? Remember that

> "There is a fountain filled with blood
> Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
> And sinners plunged beneath that flood
> Lose all their guilty stains."

Permit me briefly to tell you what I think of Jesus. I think he is divine. I think he is the Son of God and the Savior of man. I think that only angel eloquence is adequate to express the power, the grandeur, and the love of Christ. The majesty of his

nature is but dimly portrayed by an eminent divine when he says, "Christ is the savior of one world and the chief joy of another—the storm, his frown; the sunlight, his smile; the spring morning, his breath; the earthquake, the stamp of his foot; the ocean, a drop on the tip of his finger; heaven, a sparkle on the bosom of his love; eternity, the twinkling of his eye—able to heal a heart-break, hush a tempest, drown a world or flood immensity with his glory." But I want to tell you what I think of Christ as a savior. Eighteen years ago I was a wayward, sinful boy far from God, but

> "Jesus sought me when a stranger,
> Wandering from the fold of God,"

and

> "I saw one hanging on a tree
> In agonies of blood;
> He fixed his languid eyes on me
> As near his cross I stood.
>
> Sure never to my latest breath
> Can I forget that look;
> He seemed to charge me with his death,
> Though not a word he spoke.
>
> A second look he gave, which said:
> 'I freely all forgive,
> My blood is shed to ransom thee—
> I die that you may live.'"

Yes, Jesus saves, and he "saves to the uttermost." That is the most precious thought to me, and I wish I could tell the world how Christ can save.

" Waft it on the rolling tide,
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!
Tell the sinners far and wide,
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!
Shout salvation full and free,
Highest hills and deepest caves,
This our song of victory,
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!"

"What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?"

C. W. EAST.

LIVING ISSUES.

BY REV. CLARENCE W. EAST,

Pastor of the Haven M. E. Church, Jackson, Mich.

Text: "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Luke 9:60.

This is one of those portions of Scripture that has been the subject of a low-minded misunderstanding. Jesus honored a man by choosing him to be one of his preachers. No greater honor has ever come to man. Where are names more to be reverenced than those that obeyed the call that the Son of Man gave them in those days to preach the kingdom of God? Evidently there was that in this man which fitted him to proclaim the Messiah's truth. Jesus did not call men indiscriminately. While he desired all to know his truth and to be in a real sense his disciples, he was very careful in his choice of those who were to be apostles. We have just at this place the account of a man who offered his discipleship, a scribe, as we are told by one of the writers. Jesus tested him on the spot, saying, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where

to lay his head." He would have no man untested or with an unworthy motive.

The man of the text evidently knew of his ability to preach the gospel. He acknowledged the obligation. He consented to the command of the Master, but made a condition as to the time to begin. He said, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." Now, the imputation of offense to the Lord's answer has been due to the supposition that this man's father was already dead, and waiting to be buried. But evidently we are not to understand the case so. In the first place, Jesus never interfered with any real duty of life. He rejoiced to find men comprehending and performing their duties. He gives the primal duties of man highest sanction and weightiest authority. It is characteristic of his gospel to gather up and put in clearest light the primary virtues. He certainly endorsed the command, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

Furthermore, the young man's excuse evidently is not the expression of the actual death of his father, but rather is an oriental way of saying that the father is old and the son desires to remain at home till he passes away. The son would not be away from home attending upon the ministry of Jesus if his father were actually dead. The oriental uses imagery when possible, and exaggerates for the sake of emphasis. Hence his saying, "Suffer me first to go and bury my

father," is a figurative and emphatic way of saying that his father has retired from the activities of life and he is the oldest son at home. Jesus' reply indicates that he understood the circumstances. Taking up the man's figure he replied in words that we hope were a life-lesson to him, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

We may take at least two views of the attitude of this man's mind concerning preaching the gospel, both of which lead to the same practical lessons. We may suppose him to have a low estimate of the dignity and necessity of that which Jesus bade him do. He is aware of the stir and movement of life about him, but does not place high enough estimate upon it. It can be understood by that which approaches an analogy in modern times. Thirty-seven years ago the life of this republic was threatened. Rebellion was in actual existence. The flag had been fired upon and the national capital was menaced. Our standing army was not sufficient to deal with this rebellion. The nation must provide an army. A call was made for volunteers. You know what an enthusiastic response was made. School, shop, store, farm and home were left for army life, for battle, and possible death. What if men had said then, "Father Abraham, suffer us first to assure our fortunes or care for our homes. When all our obligations at home are discharged, then we will enlist." What would the

universal heart of man have said to such a reply? Would not the rebuke have been the same as this of him who ever speaks the universal word, "Let these things care for themselves; but go thou and save thy country?" Men did say these same words to the President's call. This man of Christ's day was not the first or last of his kind. Very plausible might seem the argument of filial duty in the time of war, but we would execrate the man who made it. The draft was the nation's reply to those who said in that crisis, "Suffer me first to bury my father." The present days bring to our minds the same principle. Our national life is not threatened by the Spaniard. We go not to war in a personal cause; but that unspeakable outrages against humanity are committed in Cuba, calls us to do battle again. Who is there that can put personal interests above humanity's cause in this matter? If the test comes, which God avert, we know what the nation's reply will be to those who do. The absolute command of the Son of Man, "Go thou," is his reply to the man who made the excuse in his day.

The other view which we take of this man's attitude toward Jesus' call is that he saw the greatness of the service to which he was called, but out of a life in conflict with his highest conceptions made this very pious excuse of filial duty. Such we find to be a quite common human fault. "They all with one consent

began to make excuse." How often is that to be written after calls to higher privilege and duty! It seems easier to live on the dead level. Hills and mountains are hard to climb. The wind blows strong on the peaks. Is there not something we can tie ourselves to down on the plains? We would like to see the mountain sunrise and sunset and breathe the purer air, but the pains are too great. How easy it is for such a disposition to find even a pious excuse—"suffer me first to bury my father!" How we could honor such a request if made at the right time or in the right spirit! But made as it was, how it makes this man sink in our esteem! Able to preach the kingdom of God, sinful, suffering and ignorant men waiting for the good news; but the high duty set aside for personal ease, and conscience hardened by a pious excuse. Let us take the force of this rebuke to ourselves. "Let the dead bury their dead." Let dead issues care for themselves. Let us live for the living. This does not mean that we are to force ourselves astride of some hobby. But it means that we are to bring to life freshness and vigor. We are to give to the issues of life their merited treatment. We are to seize the meaning of life as it is, first for our own characters.

"Not enjoyment and not sorrow
Is our destined end or way,
But to live that each to-morrow
Finds us farther than to-day."

Moreover, we are to grasp the meaning of life as we are related to our fellow-men. The golden rule must be our guiding social principle. "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

We are to grasp the meaning of life as it is since God has sent his only begotten Son into the world. There is a gospel to be preached, a word of life that heaven has given to earth. This is the great issue of all time, to preach the gospel to every creature. Souls have their sins and consequent guilt and misery. Humanity is poor in all elements of spiritual life. We need truth, mercy, grace and peace. Jesus Christ is come that we might have life and have it more abundantly. He who was rich became poor that we, through his poverty, might be rich. The test question of life is, How are we related to this movement which is from the heart of God to the hearts of men? Can it not be said of many of us that we are so immersed in our own selfish and sometimes petty concerns that Christ's life or man's need does not touch us? When the light does struggle through into our minds by some divine command or noble example, do we not shut it out again with some rag that we find at our feet? Do we not even as this man did, tear up God's book to fill the chinks that let the light into our understanding? I urge no one into heroic positions. I simply declare that currents of divine life are all about us. They would flow into our souls as the air

flows into our lungs. Fellowship with God and his Son, Jesus Christ, his truth to learn, obey and preach, this is life. All that falls below it is death. It endures but in the act. It adds no strength or culture to the spirit. Only as we live on the plane of his life do we know the life which is life indeed and which shall be forevermore.

NEARNESS TO GOD.

BY REV. G. D. CHASE,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, Charlotte, Mich.

Text: "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you." James 4:8.

Out of this text, as from a bud, there blossoms the full flower of the gospel. What is the grand aim and purpose of the gospel but to bring together God and man in relations of such intimacy and communion that the divine nature may interpenetrate our fallen nature and bring forth anew in us the glory of the divine image? And what is the gospel method of accomplishing this result but the mutual approach of God and man—the seeking Savior coming forth to meet the seeking soul? The gospel is on the one hand a proclamation of God's approach to man, and on the other hand it is an invitation for men to come to God. It announces the mission of the Son of Man to be the seeking and saving of that which was lost; and it declares the duty of the lost to be the coming to him who is the way, the truth and the life. James with characteristic terseness and simplicity sums up

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the sublime privilege of redemption in the words of the text: "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you." It seems a very simple utterance, but it teaches several most valuable lessons.

In the first place, it teaches the possibility of close approach to God. Of course the nearness referred to is not nearness in space, for God is omnipresent. We can never be absent from him in the sense of being separated from him by space. We borrow the terms used to describe material relations to designate higher relationships; and thus we speak of a "near" friend, or a "near" relation, having in mind, not nearness in space, but nearness in sympathy, intimacy, fellowship. It is in this sense that we may draw nigh to God, and that he will draw nigh to us.

Think for a moment of the promise contained in the text. We are accustomed to read it too thoughtlessly, as if it were only an ordinary announcement; but in reality it is a most astonishing statement: "He (the almighty Ruler of the universe) will draw nigh to you." The agnostic tells us that if there be a God, we can never know him. Certain scientists seek to impress us with the thought that God is too much occupied with managing great systems of worlds to regard us in our utter insignificance. Philosophers have called him the great first cause. Tracing back the phenomena of the present through the relation of

cause and effect, they observe all phenomena linked together like a train of cars, and away at the end of the line is God, the great directive energy of all. That is better than Atheism ; but it places God a long way off. Better than all these speculative notions of God's relationship to us, and above them all in authority is the simple promise of our text, "He will draw nigh to you." Thank God for such a revelation as that. He is not an impersonal force, not a distant first cause, not a great ruler hidden away forever in the heights above us, but he is our friend, offering to become the companion of our life.

Turn back to the beginning of the story, and we read that God created us capable of fellowship with himself. He made us in his image ; he breathed into us the breath of his own life ; he implanted within us longings and aspirations that would lead us to himself for satisfaction. But sin separated the child from the Father, and the race turned away from God. Then came pain and sorrow and death, with the loss of the divine image. Does God leave the race now to endure the full penalty of its folly and sin ? Nay, we begin to read at once the promise, "He will draw nigh to you." On and on runs the promise through all the prophets—"He will draw nigh to you." His chosen people wait for his coming, eagerly peering into the darkness and listening for the first footfall of his promised approach. At length he comes, but comes

so silently that only a few shepherds on the hillside hear his approach. They caught a glimpse of the brilliant retinue that attended him; they heard a few strains that the choirs sang; but the world did not awake till later to the great fact that the Messias had come. And how near he came! "He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He was made like unto his brethren. He entered the world as we enter it—in the weakness and helplessness of childhood; he walked the same thorny paths that we find; he came shoulder to shoulder with us in the bearing of life's burdens; he entered into all our experiences of trial and temptation "that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God." He came so near us that the light of his presence illumines the work-shop, the prison-house of temptation, and every scene of earthly suffering.

"We may not climb the heavenly steeps
To bring the Lord Christ down;
In vain we reach the lowest deeps,
For him no depths can drown.

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is he;
And faith has yet its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of his seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again."

Pass on to the close of Christ's ministry and we hear him promising still greater nearness to God. He must leave his disciples, but only to return to them by his spirit. Heretofore the divine presence has been *with* them; hereafter it shall be *in* them. The day of Pentecost witnessed the fulfillment of the promise, for "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The Spirit came to abide forever. It is the teaching of the gospel that close beside every sin-burdened soul in the world there is the unseen presence of the Savior. Paul, in describing the groping of the heathen after God, declared that he was not far from every one of them. People may be so far down in sin that good people do not seek nearness with them, but they never go so low that the Crucified does not hover near them. Well may we exclaim with the Psalmist, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?"

But let me bring this promise nearer. It is addressed to "you," whoever you be. Are you bearing heavy burdens that it seems impossible for another to share with you? "He will draw nigh to you." He knows how to bear such burdens. Are you perplexed over your religious experience? Are you hungering for a richer life? Here is the promise that covers your need, "He will draw nigh to you." Take it and build upon it the hope of a larger life and a more joyous religious experience. It is the desire of God

registered all through the bible, to enter into the most intimate relations with every living soul. He would come into all our life with the sunlight of joy and the benediction of peace. He would bring into our life the wealth of his divine being, hiding our life in his and transforming us into the beauty of his image. Then why are we not filled with his presence?

We must consider the condition of the promise, "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you." With all God's eagerness for union with us, there is a point nearer than which he will not come, save in response to our own will and effort. The Savior seeking the lost can at length only stand and knock. God respects our manhood. It may be true that sin will effect an entrance into a man's heart surreptitiously, that it will steal in uninvited and perhaps without our consciousness; but God will not enter as a thief. He has given man sovereignty over his own heart's life and he respects that sovereignty. It is characteristic of sin to enter serpent-like; it is characteristic of God to address man's higher nature and secure his consent and co-operation.

Why are we not in the enjoyment of the closest fellowship with God? It is because we do not open the door; it is because we do not draw nigh to him. We may be very careful in our observance of all the forms of religion; but God knows whether we really open the door of our hearts to him, or merely sound

our vain petitions and march through the dreary sound of devotion in the empty chambers of a desolate formalism. There is a great difference between saying prayers and talking with God. There is a great difference between mere church attendance and acceptable worship. Formalism is to religion what decorum is to friendship; and just as it is possible still to be polite to a person for whom we have lost all love, so it is possible to attend faithfully, for a time at least, to the forms of religion after the love of God has died out in our hearts. I shall not describe the life we live when the soul has gone out of our religion. Some of us know what it is to follow Christ "afar off" as did Peter; and like him we have then found ourselves weak and unreliable. Without daily fellowship with God the heart can never know the joy of Christian service, or the blessedness of the Christian life. The old hymn puts it truly,

"How tedious and tasteless the hours
When Jesus no longer I see!
Sweet prospects, sweet birds and sweet flowers
Have all lost their sweetness to me;
The midsummer sun shines but dim,
The fields strive in vain to look gay;
But when I am happy in him,
December's as pleasant as May.

His name yields the richest perfume,
And sweeter than music his voice;
His presence disperses my gloom
And makes all within me rejoice;

I should, were he always thus nigh,
Have nothing to wish or to fear ;
No mortal so happy as I,
My summer would last all the year."

Aside from the importance of the divine presence to our own joy and salvation, there is the greatest urgency for our seeking more intimate fellowship with God for the sake of the church. The church has been giving a good deal of attention of late to reaching the masses. We have been multiplying organizations and adding ecclesiastical machinery, and branching out into all departments of philanthropic endeavor ; and great concern has been felt lest certain classes should become alienated from the church. This is well, for we must reach the people ; but I submit that a more vital question to many a church than how to reach the masses is the question how to reach God. Unless we give careful attention to this latter question it will matter very little whether we reach the masses or not. Unless we reach God, we shall have nothing to give to the masses when we reach them. When we open all the hydrants of a great system of water-works it is important that there be good connection with the source of supply. The church does well to remember that all her springs of power are in God, and without him she can do nothing. It is time to place the emphasis upon this truth. The fact is we have been reaching masses that we have not changed. Our churches swarm with people who know nothing

of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, who have never felt a thrill of the mighty power of God in their souls. The crying need of the church to-day is power to change the masses she is now reaching. Thank God for the Sunday Schools, and the Epworth Leagues, and the temperance societies, and the missionary societies, but to render them effective the channels must be kept open to God. If the multiplying of societies result in the killing of the prayer-meeting, if greater importance be attached to drawing the crowds than to drawing near to God, if clubs, and guilds, and reading circles and committee-meetings crowd out secret prayer, the private study of the Bible and family worship, then there can be but one result—the loss of the church's power. When it comes to pass that it requires more power than we have at command merely to keep the machinery moving, it is certainly high time that we look carefully after our relation to God. "Draw nigh to God." That is the message to every Sunday School teacher, every Epworth League officer, every member of the official board, every member of the church. To be efficient anywhere in the church we must live in constant nearness to God. Even the material interests of the church demand the services of Spirit-filled men. Turn back to the sixth chapter of Acts and see what class of men were selected for the first official board. The disciples called the church together and said, "Brethren, look ye out

seven men of honest report, *full of the Holy Ghost* and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." If such men were required then, they are now for all official relations in the church. Without Christ we can do nothing.

How may we draw near to God? Christ said, "Hear my voice and open the door." Let there be first a quieting of the heart's distracting tumult that we may hear the voice of God. "Oh, how rare it is to find a soul still enough to hear God speak," says Fenelon. Religious meditation is almost a lost art. We live amid clamoring cares and hurrying duties, and if in the midst of them we drop on our knees for a few moments each day and offer our petitions to God, we often think we have fulfilled our duty; but we have not listened for God's voice. Be still and hear him speak.

Then open the door. Remove the barriers to communion with God. What hinders Christ from coming into your business life? Is it dishonesty? Is it oppression of the poor? Is it selfishness? Then away with these barriers. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Open every door to Christ. Get the barriers away from the social life —the card-table, the dance, the theatre—get these things hence that Christ may come in. Get the barriers out of the home, the wine from the sideboard, the bad book from the library, the unchristian conver-

sations from the family circle; establish the family altar, put religious papers on the center table, assign "the lodge" to a subordinate place and spend some evenings at home, and Christ will come into your home life.

Pray. Get into the very presence of God in prayer. "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." It is there thy Father waits for thee with his blessing. Get into the prayer meeting; join with the church in supplication. There must be a magnifying of the time-honored means of grace if ever we draw near to God.

Work. Work is one of the most important means of grace. God draws near to those who are ready for service. As on the day of Pentecost he pours out his Spirit upon those who are panting for work to do. We draw near to Christ when we share his sympathy for the lost and go forth with him to seek and to save them. Only let all our service be performed as unto him and for his glory alone. Then through all our service we may be drawing still nearer to God. The channels through which God comes to our souls are well known from experience. Oh, that they all may be opened, and that the church may be brought into closest and richest communion with the great source of her life and power!

D. D. MARTIN.

THE SOUL'S PROTECTION AND HELP.

BY REV. D. D. MARTIN,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, St. Johns, Mich.

Text: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut. 33:27.

Moses was a patriarch of one hundred and twenty years; yet "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." God had announced that the time of his release had come. With a touching allusion to his infirmities, because of which he could not enter the promised land, by impressive ceremonies in the presence of all the people he passes his great trust over to his successor, whom he exhorts to be fearless in his conquests and brave in his enforcement "of all the words of the law." He also gives careful and prolonged instructions to the priests. After this preliminary work, in accordance with the divine command, Moses composed a song, which has been well styled "The Song of the Dying Swan." The Song of Moses, for grandeur of theme, purity and vigor of diction, the elevated strain of sentiment and language, deserves first rank in all spiritual poetry and compares favor-

ably with the most classic songs of the ages. It is the "Magna Charta of prophecy," the foundation or summary of all other prophecy. But one other song is mentioned as comparable with it, and that song they only know who have received the harp of gold, and with the "Song of Moses" sing "the Song of the Lamb."

The counterpart of the song is the blessing pronounced on the twelve tribes. The "song" is in the minor strain, being filled with warnings and visions of future calamities. In the "blessing" there is the absence of shadow, no warning, no reproof, but purely a benediction intended to encourage and uplift. The entire benediction seems rather to refer to the ideal Israel than to the twelve tribes to whom it was addressed. In fact, it seems a fitting thing that the last words from the lips of this man of God should be prophetic of the new Israel, which in the kingdom of grace should be established. As in the song, he tells of the calamities of the Israel of old, so in the benediction he tells of the glory and the greatness of the Israel redeemed, in the new kingdom, the church of Christ. To make these sublime words real to us, and more perfectly to know God as our protection and help, let us consider:

First. "The eternal God is our refuge," better rendered, "The eternal God is thy dwelling place." Every "Israelite indeed" is at home in God. From wandering among the strange and uncertain experi-

ences of life the soul returns to rest in him. In fact, the mind of man refuses to rest in anything less than the eternal. In science we take up the study of nature and are charmed with its beauty; its mysteries gradually unfold to us, surrendering their secrets, until we read the song of life in the grasses and flowers. But who wrote this song? Who gave to life this subtle charm? Our thought will not rest until God is recognized, and the chariot of the eternal is seen in the pathway of nature. We lift our eyes to the heavens, and in its deep vault there is no rest as wearily we wander, until we discover God's chariot there, for "there is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky." In all our study there is one thought that is first in mind: By whom are all these things? Some may be satisfied to behold the glistening beauty of the heavens or listen to the music of earth's songsters, but be it mine to know him "who alone spreadeth out the heavens and treadeth upon the waves of the sea." "Who knoweth not that in all these the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind." Surely he is our dwelling place. The generations of men are known in history only, and there is a doleful silence in the past as the antiquarian tries to extract from the tomb the story of life and death. Where is the home of the soul

from which the generations have come? Whence the springing forth of all this life? Can science answer? Science with her skillful finger traces all the records time has made, but where in the eternity did time begin? Whence came these records? From a standard German text-book we read, "With the ultimate beginning of things science has nothing to do," and then we turn to divine revelation and in the opening words read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and the anxious searcher for truth rests in that thought, while in the same story of creation he reads, "Let us make man in our own image." And again, "In the image of God created he them." Here man finds the place of his nativity, here is he at home and his soul rests in God.

A dwelling place is suggestive of a place of resort. So the toiler of earth amid the cares and perplexing things which he meets in the daily struggles, retires to the home, his dwelling place, and there in the bosom of his own family dries the perspiring brow and rests his aching heart and head. The Psalmist says of God, "Thou art my hiding place." Thou wilt "compass me about with songs of deliverance." To the troubled and "heavy-laden" who flee hitherward, the universe, once so dark, becomes bright; life, once a mere dull, dreary thing, "dry as the summer dust," springs into fresh luxuriance, and we feel it to be a divine, a blessed thing to live. And we hear the voice

of God as it was once heard in the Garden of Eden, and instead of discord, there seems a glorious harmony. The song of creation, when first the "morning stars sang together," is revived with everlasting hallelujahs to the eternal throne. For "the eternal God is thy refuge." "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

A dwelling place, the place of forgiveness and compassion. When deepest remorse filled the mind of the prodigal and no other thought could arouse the smothered nobility of his nature, the thought of his father's house made him arise, and turning his wandering eyes toward home, while yet a great way off, they meet the longing, compassionate gaze of the father, and soon the kiss of affection assures the son of full forgiveness, and he dwells in his father's house. Look at this sinful, defiled soul, now raging and smiting in his passion, blighting the fairest flower of domestic peace in his selfishness, crushed and withered by remorse, groaning beneath the awful sense of guilt; he will not so much as lift up his eye unto heaven, but smiting on his breast cries out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." While thus writhing in agony of spirit, God is ready with outstretched arms and a warm heart to gird him all about with joyous songs of deliverance. For "thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." O sinner, here is thy

refuge! Homeless, helpless wanderer on earth, here is thy dwelling place! When hotly pursued by every sinful passion and in your desperation you feel that "no man cares for my soul," here you may flee for succor and refuge. "As the hart panteth after the water-brook, so thirsteth my soul after thee, O God." "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink."

Here, too, is the dwelling place of truth. For truth is eternal, it comes forth from God, is upheld by him and will finally triumph. He shall "sweep away the refuge of lies." He who was in the beginning says, "I am the truth." Of him Pilate asked, "What is truth?" And to this question his whole life gave answer, and would we know the truth we must abide in him. Here alone is safety, for every false way shall be removed, every house not built on the rock will fall. Our rock is Christ. Only righteousness is known here; for "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." From a world filled with selfishness and deceit, where falsehood and sin of every kind abound, where there is no peace, is it strange that so many have said with the Psalmist, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." Here is perfect protection from the evil designs of men, and in the blessed fellowship of God's house does the soul confidently trust all its interests. In loyalty to each other, in genuineness of character, in loving sacrifice and loyal devotion to a

common cause, there is a spirit of oneness in all God's family. That his children may not be "taken out of the world, but kept from the evils that are in the world," is this refuge provided.

This dwelling place affords absolute protection. Every want of the soul is satisfied, so that hunger or thirst is never known. Outside of God the soul's hunger is fed in vain, and drinking from earth's fountains "he shall thirst again." What is agnosticism but hunger and thirst? Whom has the science of this world, which leaves God out of the question, ever satisfied? The vain philosophies of the earth will not satisfy the mind that was made to rest in God. With what will the soul that does not heed the admonition, "Hope thou in God," clothe its immortal aspiration? In God there is deliverance from "famine and nakedness," also from "peril and the sword." "He maketh wars to cease." And though severe battles are to be fought and peace must often come through conflict, yet he is the soul's invincible defender, fighting the battles and assuring victory. Yea, he has met and conquered the last enemy, which is death, and the pathway entering the eternity of God is clear in him who said, "I am the way." Is our battle with the devil? Jesus conquered him with the word of truth, and to this we may resort and are safe; it is the Eternal Word. Is our struggle with doubts? We can reach hither our fingers and hands, and the wounded

Savior will compel us to believe. Are we tormented with evil passions and inherent tendencies which are at war with our minds and lust against the spirit? We can "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Are we surrounded with evil temptations from our fellows? "Come out from among them," and God will receive us and we "shall have fellowship with his Son."

All that we could ask or think, all that our hearts could desire, all that the thought of home, a habitation, a dwelling place, with every hallowed fellowship and relationship which those words suggest, are ours in him. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he heareth us." "And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions we desired of him." But this is not all; earthly fathers give good gifts to their children, "how much more shall your father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love him." "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." At home in God, he possesses us by his Spirit and we are partakers of his nature, and "are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." The eternal God, "our dwelling place," is ours by right of heir-

ship, and we shall be forever with the Lord. This is the highest aspiration of the human soul, and God would be untrue to his own work, and nature untrue to herself, life a farce, religion a mockery, and faith unreal if this superlative ambition of the soul can not be realized. Yea, it is realized, my soul rests in God.

What we have considered suggests what God *is* to us. Let us now stndy in the second place what he *does* for us: "Underneath are the everlasting arms." This figure corresponds well with that other beautiful illustration in the Song of Moses taken from natural history. The mother eagle assists her young in their flight by "taking them and bearing them on her wings." She first soars above them to give them confidence and to teach them by example, and when their wings, unaccustomed to the flight, grow weary, she spreads her strong wings beneath them and bears them up. So God deals with his children. Better that we should use all the strength we have; better that our wisdom should be exercised, and that in bearing responsibilities we should hold ourselves accountable. We are in the image of God, he deals with us as with sons, and it is to his glory that we develop individual worth and character. We are richly endowed with gifts and graces peculiar to our personality; these we should cultivate. The genius of mind should shine forth until our superiority over things about us is plainly visible. The struggle for

perfection should characterize every life. Yet in the face of these things how helpless we are. All our struggle for ascendency is vain in our own strength. In the grasp of his thought man is greater than the world. It is grander to think a world than to be a world; to be able to conceive a universe is greater than to be a universe. Yet, left to himself, how frail is man! 'Like grass which groweth up, in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth." "A reed shaken with the wind." But a worm in the dust, he is utterly helpless. Well did Job ask, "What is man that he should be clean?" But God has set his love upon us, and in Calvary we have his estimate of man's worth. It is not what we are by nature, but what by God's grace we *can be* that decides our value. The arms or wings of Jehovah are common figures in the Bible. Thus we find in Malachi the language, "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in her wings." In the figure the rays of the sun are its wings or arms, and as the sun gives its own light and energy for the healing and inspiration of all nature, so Christ is the light of the world, and beneath such wings of light there is no night, there is no death. His passion is evidence of his love for the world, to whom he appeals in this language to Jerusalem, "How oft would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under

her wings, and ye would not." Such are the wings of light, the arms of love, and the assurance of support and comfort that God gives. "He shall gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom." The everlasting arms give us the assurance of never-failing help in God. He does not grow weary—"his mercy endureth forever." His resources are without limit, he has the help ready just when we need him—"the Lord is not slack concerning his promises." The everlasting arms reach to the remotest period of time, they extend to eternity,—"I will make an everlasting covenant with you." The sun shall fade from its glory, and the heavens shall pass away from above us, and the earth melt beneath us; but the arms of light and help will never fail,—"I will never leave thee." We cannot fall so low in this world that the everlasting arms will not reach us,—"though we fall we shall not be utterly cast down." The grave is not beyond the reach of the divine arm, but from heaven's throne, beneath the grave of every saint, do the everlasting arms of light and hope reach, and we shall be brought forth into newness of life,—"they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels."

By the right arm of God's power are we assured of victory over every foe. There is an aggressiveness in the work of God that invites our activities. The nations of the earth are to be conquered by the power

of the gospel. It ill becomes us to grow impatient or discouraged in this great work when God's hand is in the work and his everlasting arm the support. Sin will be outrun ; the powers of darkness cannot hold out ; the resources of the enemy are not infinite ; in the great conflict truth will prevail. "The eternal years of God are hers." By the infinitude of his attributes we are assured that no emergency can come that will find God's grace inadequate to meet. No restatement or re-adjustment of creed or doctrine can affect the eternal facts of God. If we undertake to adapt truth to ourselves, or alter God's revealed plans to suit the conditions or notions of men, the arms of his covenant and grace are still unchanged. Truth, changed or accommodated, ceases to be truth ; "and if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." In the larger circumference of the divine life, the everlasting, unchanging truths of God are underneath and will be vindicated.

Such are the arms of love and protection that encircle God's children, and by them we shall be sustained. A brother was moving his library from the first to the second floor of the building. His little child, a girl of four summers, wanted to help him, and getting permission she ran to the library, seized the largest volume and coming to the stairs began to cry that she was unable to go further with her burden, when the father came, and seeing her anxiety to help,

took the child and book, and in his strong arms she could carry the book and place it on the table. So God comes to us amid the burdens of life in its unequal struggle, places beneath us his everlasting arms, and no load is too heavy, no duty too great. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." To the homeless, helpless and weary of earth, there is rest in God. There is support and comfort in his grace.

THE GREAT HARVEST.

BY REV. A. P. MOORS,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, Ovid, Mich.

Text: "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few." Luke 10:2.

These weighty words were spoken to the seventy. They had just been appointed and were being sent before him into the cities and villages "whither he himself would come." The work of the seventy was to announce his approach and prepare the people to receive him. But the vision of the Savior was not bounded by the narrow limits of Palestine. His broad sympathies compassed the whole earth; and as this little handful of workers was sent forth into the great world, he doubtless felt as you and I cannot, the *painfulness* of this sublime utterance, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few."

Before entering further into the discussion of this subject I wish to offer this single remark—we learn from this and kindred Scriptures what harvest work is. These disciples were sent forth to tell about him, to so proclaim their message, to so represent him to

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the people that they should receive him when he came. This, then, is harvest work, so to tell men of Jesus, so to represent him, so to lift him up before the gaze of a perishing world that it may accept him. Whether we publish the message with stammering speech or eloquent phrase, if that be the end of our testimony we are doing harvest work. Neither science, nor literary criticism, nor self is to be exalted, but Jesus Christ, our Lord. Let us consider particularly some things of which Christ speaks concerning this harvest.

I. He declares that it has already come. There is no time to wait. It already presses. Hear his words in John 4:35, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields. Behold, I say unto you, they are white already to harvest." The time of harvest is when the grain is ripe; so the great harvest time for souls is when all things are ready for men to come to Jesus.

1. When our text fell from the lips of the Son of God, *that time had come;* Jesus had said, "Come, for all things are now ready." He had also cried in the ears of the people on a great national feast-day when the multitudes were before him, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." The harvest truly had come to that generation when Jesus was on earth.

2. *Do we live in harvest time?* Are the fields to-day white for harvest? Are all things *now* ready

for the precious ingathering? Two things are as certain as that we live, souls in this day are in desperate need of coming to Jesus, of being saved from sin. Who can declare this fact with all its weight of meaning? The dear Son of God is waiting, willing, able to save all who come to him. He is saying to-day as when here, "Come, for all things are *now* ready," and, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink."

3. *What hinders the harvest?* When people need to be saved and Jesus, with hands reached out in invitation, waits to save them, why do they not come? We stand face to face with the old, unsolved problem of human weakness and wickedness, human blindness and perverseness. Men need not be weak; they might be strong. They need not be wicked; they might be pure and good. The whole world might come to Jesus. He is able to save all in a single day, but mankind *will not.* He said of this matter, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

4. *How urgent is this harvest!* How pressing and imperative the need that it should be gathered *now!* How necessary so to lift up the Son of God before the gaze of perishing sinners to-day that they may be drawn unto him now! In no other manner can this work be done. In no other way can the world be saved. Let us make this fact a reality. Souls are perishing, are being lost. They must be

rescued now or they will be beyond our reach.

II. We come now to the second thing of which our Savior speaks concerning this harvest. They are momentous words. How I wish we might feel their gravity as he did! That they might mean to us what they did to him! "The harvest truly is great." Let us look at some things indicative of greatness in other matters and see how this harvest bears the test of these measurements.

1. *Greatness of preparation is an indication of a great enterprise or undertaking.* If you were to see a large amount of material gathered on a man's premises you would say, "A grand house is to be built here,—a costly superstructure is to be erected." Again, if one should rear a huge derrick and put in his blocks and cables to lift a weight you could carry on your shoulder, your judgment would be, "How foolish!" But God has made the most stupendous preparation for the world's salvation, and folly cannot be charged to him. "For in him are hid all the secrets of wisdom and knowledge." It would be impossible to specify all the items of preparation the Almighty has employed to establish the gospel. We can trace this work of getting ready through all past history. Abraham's call, his separation, faith, grand history, the call of Moses, the whole history of the Hebrew nation, the giving of the law, the symbolic sacrifices, the prophecies, all pointed to the final con-

summation. Judges, priests, prophets and kings all witnessed to the coming of the world's Redeemer and foretold his glory. In the end of the ages he appeared to finish this stupendous work of preparation. He lived a sinless life. He taught as never man taught. He wrought his incomparable works of power, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, health to the sick and life to the dead. Last of all and most significant of all, he gave his life as a sacrifice for the world's sin, came forth from the sepulcher, and was thus "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The final preparation was made at Pentecost. The Savior had said, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." With this enduement of power the glorious work of preparation was made complete. Tested by this measurement of preparation the harvest truly is great.

2. *Value is another index of greatness.* The great Kohinoor diamond is the envy of kings and courts because of its immense value. The boulders of the field are much larger, but not to be compared with it in importance, because they are of little or no value. So the greatness of this harvest is to be estimated by the preciousness of that which is gathered—by the value of human souls. It is not perishable,

earthly gain, but the immortal souls of men. The Lord Jesus expresses the value of the soul in that most solemn and momentous of all questions in the Bible, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The soul is the self, that vital something—call it substance, principle, or what you will—that vital something in man whereby he perceives, remembers, reasons and wills. It shall live and grow forever, and who can measure its stores of knowledge in the fathomless future? Who can comprehend the largeness of its love and joy, and the exceeding greatness of its power in the far cycles of eternity? So, we see, the value of the soul does not consist so much in what it is now as in what it shall be. Not in its possessions to-day, but in what it *shall* possess; not in its past and present achievements, but in its *possibilities* for achievement. The handful of grain sown in the field to-day, if sown again and again as the seasons come and go, will in the coming years become the high-piled and overflowing garner, sufficient to feed a nation. The dark, ugly little bulb which you plant in the earth in the springtime, will in the coming summer become the beautiful flower to charm the eye with its beauty and regale the sense with its grateful perfume. So the souls of men, redeemed and washed in the blood of Christ, will shine in a coming eternity as the sun in his splendor.

We are disposed in our ignorance and selfishness to look with contempt upon the condition and attainments of others, those we think are below us in the social, intellectual and moral scale. But no human soul is contemptible. Not the poorest, weakest, most besotted. There is not a human being in this world but has a possible destiny which may rival the glory of an archangel. Consider a soul as low down as you can imagine, at the very foot of the ladder of moral, mental, affectional and volitional attainments. Let such an one be made pure in heart by the holy washing and receive the inspiration of the new life by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit ; then watch its upward movement, see it climb, rung by rung, the ladder which Jacob saw, casting aside at every step the sensual and groveling. Behold the purifying and intensifying of the affections, the quickening of the mind after higher knowledge, and finally the emancipation of the will and its endowment with the franchise of freedom. Can you describe or even imagine what may be the destiny of such a being in the ages of eternity ? Infinite prescience alone can comprehend what it shall be. "For beloved, now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him." Such is the value of one soul, and if we could multiply this with the number of all souls we might approximate toward an adequate estimate of

the greatness of this harvest. But the very thought overwhelms us, "it is too high, we cannot attain unto it." "The harvest truly is great."

3. Again, we see the greatness of this harvest by comparison. When we put the little which has been done alongside of that which remains to be done—when we see how much waits to be accomplished even in Christian lands, the multitudes who are but little above the heathen, the degradation in the slums of the cities, the carelessness and vileness to be found everywhere, the ravages of intemperance, the corruption in political circles, Sabbath desecration, and the power and shamelessness of the Sunday newspapers—when we see these multiplied and mighty evils we are deeply impressed with the greatness of the harvest, even at our own doors, especially when we consider how few, comparatively, are trying to stem and turn back this tide of evil. But when we look at the hundreds of millions of Asia, of the dark continent of Africa, and of the islands of the sea, who have no knowledge of the Son of God, and remember that we are at the close of the nineteenth century, the greatness of the harvest becomes oppressive. Still this problem becomes larger and more difficult as we consider the mighty forces of evil which are operating to hinder the harvest. Thousands of years of heathen history confront this work. Evil and wickedness crystalized into caste and custom by centuries of ac-

cretion hold these nations as in fetters of iron. The subtle and yet potent law of heredity, running through scores of acquiescent generations, has vitiated every fibre of their moral, social and intellectual being. When we add to this the words of our Savior, "The laborers are few," and consider that they are applicable to this age, the greatness of the task and the difficulties of the situation become little less than appalling. These facts incline us to a gloomy outlook. They are the raw material from which pessimism is made. But there is another side from which to approach this subject, there is a hopeful aspect to this case.

III. As a conclusion to this discourse let us look at some encouragements to faith, some considerations which inspire hope and courage in the heart of the Christian worker, and which point to final success.

1. The Lord of this harvest is not finite man, but the infinite God, and he who has commissioned and sent forth his laborers will bring to pass sometime, and in his own way, the long desired consummation. The delay may seem long, but the end is sure.

3. Every triumph of wickedness is its own defeat, "for God causes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." Infidelity triumphed in France in the days of the Revolution; but that triumph was the funeral of French liberty, and the streets of Paris ran ankle deep in

human gore. So has it ever been. History teaches the fact that when men break away from God, in that very act they break over into sudden ruin. Science in every effort to dethrone God discredits itself, falls into confusion and becomes a Babel of conflicting opinions and theories. Man's only well-being and progress lies along the line of faith, obedience and love, and some time the world will find out the truth of these things. When that glad day comes there shall be heard "the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees." Men shall press into the kingdom "as the doves to their window," and "a nation shall be born in a day."

3. Another encouragement is that the action of force is without observation. Results alone show its presence and operation. How silent the growth of vegetation! Not a sound as loud as a heart-beat, and yet how vast and majestic the forests resulting from the action of this silent force! So there are gracious forces operating in human society to-day, mighty forces, leavening it with the principles and life of the gospel. These forces are silent in their action. They are unseen, unrecognized by the majority of people, nevertheless they are living and real. You will recall in this connection the incident of the prophet Elisha and his servant. The Syrians attributed all their military misfortunes and disasters to the prophet, and against this one man they sent "a

great host." They surrounded the home of the prophet in the dead of night. When the servant of Elisha went forth in the morning he saw the whole city surrounded by the black tents of the Syrian host. All the foot-hills were covered with the camp of the enemy, and there seemed no escape. Every avenue of flight was cut off. In alarm he came into the presence of the prophet crying, "Alas, master, how shall we do?" But Elisha prayed, and the eyes of the young man were opened and he saw, and behold, the mountains were full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. The *foot-hills* were covered with the enemies of the prophet, but the *mountains* were full of the hosts of the Lord for the defence of his humble servant. To all except the one with the vision of faith the forces of Jehovah were unrecognized, unseen, nevertheless they were present, living and real. The world sees and takes account of the powers of darkness, and because it sees nothing beyond or higher it fancies that nothing higher or better exists. There are many professed disciples of Jesus whose sight is no clearer. They behold nothing beyond or above the enemy's lines, and cry with Gehazi, the faithless servant of Elisha, "Alas, master, what shall we do?" There are many proofs of God's power working among the nations, silent and gradual, to be sure, but potent and real. The great necessity of these days is that the church shall see these "signs of the times," that

it shall enter every open door and press every advantage to the utmost limit of success. Moses endured as seeing him who is invisible. Through the power of this faith he led Israel out of Egypt into Canaan. So the people of God to-day, endowed with this same faith, which is the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," might assault and destroy every stronghold of sin and see the glorious coming of the Prince of Peace.

4. One more encouragement remains to be noted. *The laborers are increasing.* This is true in two particulars. The number is greater than ever before, and their power is increased. There are people, and good people, too, who doubt these statements. They tell us "the times are getting late;" the shadows are deepening, and the world is getting worse. Is it true? I believe the reverse to be true. The world is getting better. No one can carefully study the history of the past without being convinced of this fact. Scan the social or political history of any European nation and it must be apparent to any unprejudiced mind. Compare the reign of Henry VIII or of Charles IV in either of these particulars with that of the peerless queen, Victoria, and the difference is like light and darkness. There were good people in the past, and grand principles were contended for; and there are bad people to-day, and evil forces are operating with malignant energy. But the advantage is

with the present. As we look upon a distant range of mountains the peaks seem close to each other, but as we approach we find that between them there are broad reaches of table-land and wide, deep valleys, and that really their summits are far apart. So as we look upon the distant past we are in danger of being deceived by the same optical illusion. Great names and great events shine in those distant heavens and we are tempted to imagine that everything then was great and sublime. But all we need to undeceive us is correct history: In those days there were broad table-lands of mediocrity, and deep, wide valleys of meanness and wickedness as now, wider and deeper than any to-day. Soon, I trust, we shall hear the royal proclamation, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in."

Two thoughts by way of application:—

1. No work in the world is so glorious and enduring as that done in *this harvest field.* The picture shall fade on the canvas, time shall rub out the brightest colors of the artist, his fingers shall crumble to dust the sculptured marble, but work done for souls shall endure and shine with increasing splendor forever.

2. Let us pray the Lord of the harvest to show us our place of labor in his field of effort, and apply ourselves with all diligence to the accomplishment of

our allotted task until he shall call us to our reward. Amen.

THE UNIVERSAL INSPIRATION.

BY REV. E. L. KELLOGG,

Presiding Elder of the Grand Traverse District.

Text: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man." 2 Cor., 12:7.

From the beginning God planned to have intimate association with every man, but disobedience has severed those friendly relations. "Your iniquities have separated between you and God, and your sins have hid his face that he will not hear." The culmination of the plan of salvation is the restoration of the divine and human fellowship. Hence, "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man." "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." There is no doubt in any mind as to the offer of helping grace to all men in Christendom. "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man will open the door I will come in to him." But some may inquire, how many does the "every man" of the text embrace? May we take it literally? Is God helping those who sit in darkness? Or have all past

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generations of the heathen gone to the grave without help from God? We know that salvation is by faith, and recognize the fact that they cannot believe in him of whom they have not heard. God will "judge the world in righteousness." "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." Now, how can those who have no revelation from God, written or oral, be held accountable in the day of judgment?

We are inclined to believe that the heathen world in all generations had an idea of God, some of them, possibly, a limited knowledge of him. *Idea* and *knowledge* are distinct. To illustrate, astronomers watching Uranus twenty-five years after its discovery, and noticing occasional deflections in its orbit, conceived the idea that another planet belonging to our solar system was drawing it from its regular path. Search was made and a new planet, now known as Neptune, was discovered, so what was formerly an idea has become knowledge. A few years ago Mr. Edison and others had an idea that electricity could be utilized to afford light and power for practical purposes. After several years of experiment, the world knows of the possibility and practicability of electric light and power.

There is a sentiment that those who have no written or oral revelation have no idea of God. Dr. Olin, at one time missionary secretary, used to deliver stirring missionary addresses based on the premise

that there is no possible help for the heathen until they receive God's word. But there are some facts which indicate that God is helping in some measure those who "sit in darkness," waiting for the word of life, that they have an idea of God, that God manifests himself to "every man." There is no doubt concerning the personal revelation of God to all who are enlightened by the Word. God can manifest himself to "every man." He created him in his own image, not physical image. If we were to have a spiritual vision whereby we could "see him as he is" we should not see a being with feet and hands as a man. But we have a *nature* like unto his. We are created like God in that we are intellectual, and moral, and spiritual. Spirit holds fellowship with spirit, and by this means God can and does commune with men. Among the facts which suggest that all men feel the touch of his personal presence and power, we note :

First, the fact of universal worship. All classes of men, in all ages, of all grades of civilization from the most degraded to the most refined and cultured, worship some deity, some being or thing which they call God. Men everywhere act as do Christians when conscious of the divine presence ; they seem awed by a presence which moves them to worship. The fact of universal worship can be accounted for only by the universal manifestation of God to man.

A second fact is that of a general or universal sense of guilt, particularly among the heathen and pagan nations. It is not thus with those who are enlightened, for they sin against light and knowledge, and become so hardened that their consciences do not disturb them. The fact that the heathen sin ignorantly may account for the great revivals among them. Such ingatherings as the reception of 22,000 by the Baptist church in Telugu, and the salvation of 10,000 under the preaching of Tamil David in 1897, and the tidal waves of spiritual power during recent years in India, are without parallel in Christian lands. This sense of guilt is evident from their efforts to quiet their consciences by self-torture, by the payment of large sums of money, by frequent and long pilgrimages, and the sacrifice of their offspring. No class of Christians can be found who makes such sacrifices for their religion. It is said that few of the heathen ever sing. The dark places are joyless and songless. Personal testimonies abound. A native Hindu hearing of Christian teachers on the coast several hundred miles away who taught that the sense of guilt could be entirely removed, made the journey on foot, heard their words, believed and found peace. He said that all his people were always burdened with the sense of guilt.

There are many facts which indicate that an approximately correct idea of God is found among all nations in all ages. Ancient mythology recognizes one

deity which is called the father of gods and men. His name is Zeus. Max Muller says, "Zeus was originally to the Greeks the supreme god, nay at some time their only god. God can be perceived in spite of the haze which mythology has thrown about his name." It is stated on good authority that in times of great emergencies the old Roman passed by all his lesser deities and appealed to the great god, Jove. Dr. Cocker, late of the Michigan State University, declared that "learned and trustworthy critics, Asiatic and European, affirm that the ground of the Brahminical faith is monotheistic. It recognizes one absolute, supreme being as the source of all things." Thus we see that the great ancient religions, though very corrupt, had originally the idea of the true God, and that all the degrading effects of idolatry have not obliterated that idea. Now turn to the uncultured or savage races. Dr. Livingstone informs us that the most degraded tribes of South Africa have a very correct idea of God, whom they worship and call "The Great Spirit." We all know the same is true of the North American Indians, who also call God "The Great Spirit." The Fijian, isolated from other nations from time immemorial, does not know who built the monuments of solid masonry in his island home, but he knows who reared the everlasting hills and built the universe. He cannot tell whence his fathers came, or who ruled his native land five hundred years ago, but he believes that the race

came from the Great Spirit, and that he reigns in earth and heaven. The facts are before us. The whole world has an idea of God, an approximately correct idea.

How can we account for these things? Some say by tradition. It is true the race in the beginning had some acquaintance with God; it may be reasonably supposed that the people at Babel knew him. But tradition is a very unsatisfactory basis for historical facts. The modern Sunday School is only about two hundred years old, and even now the world is in doubt concerning the originator of this important branch of Christian work. The "Long Roll Call," of very recent origin as a feature of church financiering, has several claimants to the honor of authorship. In a few years the one hundredth anniversary of the settlement of your city will be celebrated, when the honors will be declared in favor of several men. Since it is so very difficult to convey historical facts with all the help of written records, how can we hope to hand down rational ideas through several thousand years? We see the divergent lines pass out from Babel, and after three thousand years at the end of one of these lines in South Africa God is known as the Great Spirit. Another line followed to the home of the North American Indian gives a like result. The same is true of the South Sea Islands.

Now we affirm that such perfect agree-

ment in fundamental ideas, such as the being, character and attributes of God, cannot be accounted for by tradition. Indeed, verbal information is inadequate to give the idea of God. We do not depend upon it in Christian lands. The affirmation, "there is a God, infinite in all his attributes," would be meaningless. Those who give information concerning things unknown illustrate them by things known. But to what shall we liken God? Tradition does not account for the prevalence of the idea of God, but the words of the text make it very plain, "the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man." God evidently reveals himself personally to all men. He inspired the prophets and others to write his Word for the world, but he has done more, he reveals or manifests himself to every man, and this is universal inspiration. Thus we see that God is helping the heathen. They all receive some light. We may not be surprised when we meet adults from all lands and of every age in heaven. God can thus manifest himself to the souls of men. He has done so in the past. Melchizedek and Balaam knew God. King Saul, when anointed, had experiences other than those resulting from the oil on his head and the word of Samuel in his ear. Neither faith nor a right life is a prerequisite to the touch divine, for many great sinners are convinced of their guilt by God alone. Peter intimates that there may be some fruit of the Spirit in

all the world. Hear him: "In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him." And in Rom. 2:14 we read Paul's words: "When the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves." This view of the text suggests a manifestation of the great love of God for the world outside of the gift of his Son and the effort of his church. The plan of salvation embraces the personal effort of God, himself going to "every man," imparting strength and raising him to a life of righteousness. God is holding the fort. He is helping all the world always.

This view of the case does not antagonize the efforts of the church to evangelize the world. It does not supersede the "go ye" of our Lord. The touch of God does not reveal his will to men. The fact that every man has a rush-light does not argue that he is at liberty to withhold from them the electric search-light of the gospel. The doctrine of universal inspiration gives courage to undertake the great work of turning the heathen world away from its dumb idols, away from its superstitions and errors to the living God, who is always helping its infirmities. The assurance of our text helps our faith to realize that God has gone before and is now impressing the souls of all men in all the world; approving the right and enforcing a sense of guilt on the disobedient. Without such

assurance we could not advise any effort to rescue the heathen world from the night of sin. We do not believe that any progress could be made in the world's evangelization if God did not thus manifest himself to every man.

The doctrine of universal inspiration gives courage to undertake the conversion of sinners in Christian lands. All our arguments and eloquence would be in vain but for the personal appeal of God himself through the Spirit to sinners. Did I not believe in the doctrine of universal inspiration, I should never pay another dollar to the cause of missions, or remain another day in the work of the Christian ministry ; but seeing that God is doing so much to save all our race, it behooves all men to do their utmost to help God to rescue all the perishing. Could sinners see all the force of this text, it would help to inspire their courage to undertake Christian life. The fact that God is helping every man inspires our most ardent love for him. The world honors the memory of those who excel in acts of benevolence to the poor and needy ; and now as we see God personally helping the very needy in all the world we can not but love him most ardently. We have been accustomed to think of God as manifesting himself in great glory on Sinai's brow, in the tabernacle, in the temple, and especially in the holy of holies, and possibly we have persuaded ourselves that the storm-center of God is to-day very near

our altars ; but the Word declares that he gives according to greatest need, and we see by the text that he is deeply interested in "*every* man." This being the case, God is much in the dark places of the earth. He is not far from the slums of our great cities ; he is helping those who have great sorrow of heart and great responsibilities to bear. God has been often at the White House in these last days, helping our President, and not forgetting our enemies in their need.

A just and comprehensive view of the text will help us rise above self and selfish ambitions, and while it inspires our love for God, it will give great courage to follow where he leadeth.

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